



Exploring Local Government Approaches to Sustainable Practice:
An Investigation into Tourism's Development in Tasmania

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Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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I, Barry Miles May, declare that the work in this thesis had not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted in whole or in part as part of the requirements for any other academic degree or diploma. I also declare that this PhD thesis entitled, 'Exploring Local Government Approaches to Sustainable Practice: An Investigation into Tourism's Development in Tasmania' is no more than 100,000 words exclusive of tables, figures, appendices and references. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

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Abstract

This thesis has addressed a gap in the literature regarding perceptions among local government in the Australian State of Tasmania towards tourism and its integration with sustainable practise. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2008) has advocated implementing the concept of sustainable tourism at destination levels in mitigation of the negative externalities acknowledged to precipitate socio-cultural and environmental change in local communities where tourism influxes proliferated (Helbling, 2010). But the exclusivity of neo-liberal pro-growth tourism policy agendas evident at National and State Government levels may have overlooked a duty of care regarding the effects of tourism influxes and prompted questions in respect of the consequences from increased demand generation and the ensuing commodification of both community and environment (Tribe, 2008; Bramwell and Lane, 2011; Buckley, 2012). Australia has since discontinued membership of the UNWTO and dialogue regarding the integration of sustainability and care of the tourism product has appeared disproportionate to the importance placed on maximising its economic contribution. This study has explored grounds for suggesting that tourism policies in Tasmania, by pursuing short-term agendas to maximise tourism's economic contribution, may have overlooked the associated longer term social and environmental risks were the resource base on which tourism is dependent is rendered unsustainable.

Relative to other Australian States the greater importance placed on tourism's contribution to Tasmania's economy when coupled to the high touristic value bestowed on the State's pristine topography (Government of Tasmania, 2013a), has argued strongly for its effective management as a sustainable resource in accord with UNWTO advocacy. The research question asked - *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* A two-phase inductive research design was applied comprising a content analysis of council planning documents and interviews with local government employees. Collectively, these interrogated the local status of tourism in Tasmania and whether stakeholders from within, but also outside the State's tourism industry, acted to progress or resist the integration of sustainable tourism. Rational choice theory was used to explore the differing responses of

industry and governments (Burns, 1972; Scott, 2000, Boudon, 2009). The study determined that governmental arrangements regarding tourism's management in Tasmania have acted to blunt its competitive edge, its amenability to the integration of sustainable tourism, and exposed the socio-cultural and environmental integrity of its communities to long-term risk.

Key words: tourism, sustainability, neo-liberalism, political economy, community.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Overview

1.0 Introduction

Particularly following from the nineteen eighties and the reemergence of neoliberalism governments have increasingly courted tourism for its contribution to economic growth (Hall, 2011a; Harvey, 2011). However, more recently international governmental agencies (UNWTO/UNEP, 2007; UNWTO, 2008; UNWTO/UNEP, 2009) have voiced concerns regarding the negative impacts associated with tourism's global growth. The negative socio-cultural and environmental externalities entailed have occurred in the wake of tourism's exponential global growth reaching levels deemed unsustainable with that industry's aggregated activity implicated as a contributory factor in climate change (Hernandez and Ryan, 2011; Scott, 2011). But the pro-growth mantra driving tourism's global development has proved resistant to initiatives designed to moderate growth levels. Macbeth (2005) has noted that the importance of tourism to government has ensured its essentially political nature in which policy agendas have sought to maximise economic contributions. By way of mitigation advocacy for the concept of sustainable tourism has been acknowledged by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation membership as the favoured solution (UNWTO, 2008). But to have effect the concept has also required broad-based operationalisation at destination community levels where tourism activity manifests in real rather than theoretical terms. However, although the Australian Government at the time of commencing this study was a signatory to the UNWTO accord progress regarding integration of the concept into national tourism policy has remained unclear (Moyle, Char-lee, McLennan, Ruhanen and Weiler, 2014).

Evidence identifying Australian State Government responses to sustainable tourism while evident have been modest in scope (Dwyer, Forsyth, Spurr and Hoque, 2010). In the State of New South Wales the O'Neill Report (2008) probed the issue of tourism's sustainable management and in the State of Victoria a Government inquiry into rural and regional tourism has recommended similar initiatives including the use of the Triple Bottom Line concept as a monitoring and reporting instrument (Parliament of Victoria, 2008). The current study has sought to expand the existing canon of knowledge regarding the status of sustainable principles in relation to

tourism among local governments and their councils in the context of the Australian State of Tasmania. Tasmania as the context for the study is particularly important because relative to other Australian States the Tasmanian Government has placed significantly greater reliance on tourism's contribution to the State's economy. The high touristic value bestowed on the State's pristine topography (Government of Tasmania, 2013a) has argued strongly for its effective management as a sustainable resource in accord with UNWTO advocacy. However, the exclusivity of neoliberal pro-growth tourism policies pursued at Australia's National and State Government levels may have overlooked the socio-cultural and environmental risks associated with unmonitored increases in tourism demand. At the point of commencing this study evidence that directives regarding the implementation of sustainable tourism had been communicated to local government and their councils in Tasmania by the Australian Government were unclear (Dredge, 2006a; ISF, 2011).

While Tourism Tasmania, the State's tourism commission is mandated to generate tourism demand in international and domestic markets it has fallen to the State's twenty-nine municipalities as custodians of the State's tourism product to ensure the quality standards. Despite attention given to generating tourism demand by Australia's National and State Governments evidence of due concern regarding the environmental consequences from the resulting increases in tourism have been poorly documented (Whinam and Chilcott, 2003). In this regard, preoccupations ensuring tourism's economic contribution have appeared disproportionate to that ensuring continued social and environmental sustainability. An inquiry commissioned into the status of the tourism industry in Tasmania identified duplication of management functions and less than clear leadership direction as factors detracting from optimal performance (KPMG, 2010; Parliament of Tasmania, 2011).

This study has sought to explore the possibility that both National and State Government tourism policies by adopting pro-growth agendas to maximise economic growth have overlooked a duty of care to the socio-cultural and environmental resource base on which tourism in Tasmania is dependent (Stratford, 2008). Increases in tourism forecast to influx the State's local communities have their genesis in National and State Government pro-growth marketing agendas the fait accompli that this has given rise to has required unequivocal response by Tasmania's local

governments and their councils to the presence of accelerated tourism. For the majority of these the economic benefits of increased tourism have been married to increased pressures visited on local resources and infrastructures. The socio-cultural and environmental risks associated with influxes of tourism beyond sustainable limits are already well documented. This study has sought to interrogate perspectives among local governments and their councils regarding responses to the presence of tourism and whether it is informed by or resistant to the principle of sustainability. To achieve this both primary and secondary sources were used to identify whether factors from within, but also from outside the State's tourism industry have acted to promote or to resist the introduction of sustainable tourism. In this regard, it has been argued that tourism's economic relevance for the spectrum of governments has found regard for environmental sustainability increasingly marginalised for being at variance to the policy mantra of demand maximisation. With the intensification of global activity in tourism markets, competitive tensions for Australia regardless of the level of government, have increased. The current study has explored these conflictual dynamics as they apply to local government and their councils in the context of Tasmania by applying Rational Choice Theory (RCT) as a lens to determine whether the economic aspirations through tourism has been perceived are compatible with preserving the environmental integrity on which it must depend. The research question asks – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?*

1.1 Background

Adoption of the concept of sustainable tourism by governments following the UNWTO proclamation has continued to be inhibited by several factors. Despite prolonged focus by academia, debate has continued regarding a suitable definition for the concept, coupled to which problems have also persisted regarding its operationalisation, which, to have effect would require it to be site specific (Garrod and Fyall, 1998; Murphy and Price, 2005). Further, and arguably a more fundamental obstacle, has stemmed from the concept's incompatibility with the neoliberal advocacy of market led economic growth that continues to characterise global tourism markets (Buckley, 2012). This issue has attracted increased attention because the tourism industry's pro-growth developmental mantra (Buckley, 2012; Aall, 2014) is

regarded as oppositional to the limitations implicit in the concept of sustainable tourism.

More recent research has confirmed that reconciliation of the developmental limits implicit in the principle of tourism that is sustainable, with those of the pro-growth market orthodoxy characterising the political economy of tourism, continue to be problematic (Bramwell, 2006; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Moyle, McLennan, Ruhanen and Weiler, 2014). Seeking a solution to the implicit tensions generated by neoliberal advocacy for market led economic growth against the urgent need for restraint has provided the nexus for discussions between several international organisations (WTTC, 1997; UNWTO, 2002; UNEP, 2003, Hawkins and Mann, 2007; OECD, 2014). For the most part, these discussions have coalesced around the need to fully acknowledge that tourism's unchecked development will contribute to further increases in climate change (Hernandez and Ryan, 2011) while also resulting in greater negative socio-cultural and environmental externalities for destinations. Helbling (2010:48) has explained such externalities as arising where, 'a polluter makes decisions based only on the direct cost of, and profit opportunity from, production and does not consider the indirect costs to those harmed by the pollution'. Burns and Bibbings (2009) have argued that the caution contained in this scenario recommends that governments generally should adopt the principle that tourism's future development will in large part depend on its ability to proceed sustainably (UNWTO/UNEP, 2009).

Notwithstanding the forgoing caution Australian governmental responses to the forgoing issues at both National and State levels have in the main continued to promote tourism demand for its contribution to economic growth. Imbalances resulting from this stance had led to criticism contained in the *Jackson Report* (2009). The report identified governmental preoccupations with generating tourism demand and an overemphasis on marketing to be at cost to adequate attention given to the quality of tourism supply. Subsequently this report formed the basis for the *National Long-term Tourism Strategy* (2009b) that announced a commitment to ensure a more balanced approach to tourism's development. In respect to tourism's demand and supply sides the geography and topography of Australia is defined as tourism supply. This is the tourism product experienced by visitors and encompasses consideration of

the sustainability of those economic, social and environmental aspects impacting on the quality of visitor interactions at the destination community level.

Subsequent to the federal government's introduction of the *National Long-term Tourism Strategy* (2009b) and based on its content and recommendations *Tourism 2020* (Austrade, 2016) a national strategy for enhancing growth in tourism has since attempted to unify the relevant public and private sectors of the industry towards a competitive national tourism strategy linking supply with demand. But in this regard the initiative's six strategic objectives cited appear predominantly demand oriented and concerned to ensure Australia builds share in competitive international tourism markets and of maximising economic advantage. In contrast attention given to ensure the continued integrity of tourism's social and environmental product appear premised on assumptions of a steady state and indifferent to the effects from the increasing intensity of visitor traffic. In 2015 the Australian Government discontinued membership of the UNWTO citing the reasons as incompatibility with the objectives of *Tourism 2020* (ecotourism Australia, 2015).

In respect of Tasmania as the context for this study, relative to the wellspring of available data promoting the relevance of tourism to the State's economy, particularities concerning responses by its local governments and their councils to both tourism and its environmental footprint have been modest. Brief comment by Tourism Tasmania Corporate (n.a.) in citing UNWTO advocacy for sustainable tourism has stressed that the concept should be regarded as an ethos underpinning the continued integrity of the State's tourism product. But attempts to integrate the concept with tourism policy at the local level of government appears to have been limited to one East Coast council initiative which while praiseworthy for its exhaustive detail proved the exception (Hansen, 2015). The measure of the dismissive response to tourism's management for sustainable outcomes was exemplified in a document issued by the Tasmanian premier's department and intended to guide twenty-nine municipalities regarding sustainable objectives and indicators. The document omitted reference to impacts universally known to be associated with tourism and beyond briefly alluding to waste management had included no reference to environmental stewardship (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2011).

Monitoring by municipalities of local tourism to ensure the continuance of socio-cultural and environmental integrity has assumed added importance following the UNWTO (2008) edict regarding advocacy for the implementation of sustainable tourism at destination levels. But the marginality with which the principle of sustainability continues to be regarded in the public sector appears widespread. Guthrie et al (2010) have argued that there is a general dearth of attention given to consideration of social and environmental sustainability by the public sector and a study by Whitford and Ruhanen (2010) had concluded that sustainable tourism development is not widespread at the Australian federal government level. Williams (2012) also drew attention to the general neglect by scholars and the resulting gap in respect of the implementation of sustainability in the public sector. Williams, Wilmshurst and Clift (2009) have also argued that while reporting for sustainability has experienced significant growth in the private sector, progress in the public sector, despite its considerable size, can be considered in its infancy. Ruhanen (2013:92) had observed 'few have directly investigated local governments' roles and responsibilities in facilitating or inhibiting sustainable tourism development'. In response, this study sought to contribute to knowledge by addressing the gap identified in both the literature and government archives regarding sustainability and particularly perspectives held regarding its relationship to tourism at the local government and councils in the context of Tasmania.

1.2 Situating the Research Problem

With few exceptions, all tiers of government worldwide now acknowledge and confer importance on the development and generation of tourism for its economic contribution (Burns and Bibbings, 2009; Mowforth and Munt, 2009; McIntyre, 2011). Dredge and Jenkins (2012) argue that it has been the promise of significant financial receipts that particularly in the neoliberal economies of first world post-industrial countries, but to a lesser extent in the developing world, have found tourism the subject of specific government policies calculated to foster economic growth. In this respect Delise (2009) had noted that tourism has risen to become a major generator of economic activity globally involving a broad range of enterprises, terrains, cultures and stakeholders and where, particularly in respect of developing nations, tourism's revenues often account for a significant percentage of GDP.

Notwithstanding this a review of the literature on the political economy of tourism when read in conjunction with the now voluminous work on sustainable tourism presents a scenario in which the competitive pro-growth market orthodoxy can be found to embody protocols in conflict with the growth limits implied by the introduction of tourism that is managed to sustainable levels. Higgins-Desbiolles (2011) (see also Tribe, 2006; Amsler, 2009; Bramwell, 2011; Fletcher, 2011) has noted that due to interpretations bestowed by governments engaged in tourism's economic development the inherent moderation advocated by sustainable tourism is perceived as oppositional to agendas in pursuit of maximising advantage in competitive markets. Buckley (2012) has argued that the imposition of sustainable practices is widely considered by governments to act as a developmental constraint and by extension reduced market competitiveness leading to reduced tourism revenues. In this vein Veitch (2009) also advised that the political economy of tourism is especially capable of opposing such moderation and Forstner (2004) has drawn attention to Australian Federal economic policies that privilege tourism for its substitutive value as a transformative solution for other industry sectors in decline such as agriculture, mining and resources.

Mounting concerns over issues associated with the unsustainability of tourism's growth have been global in scale. Helbling (2010) has drawn attention to the negative externalities associated with tourism that range from environmental pollution to green-house gas (GHG) emissions but also encompass the issue of social discord resulting from increased visitor numbers and the culturally disruptive effects of gentrification on local communities. At the micro level Andereck, Valentine, Knopf and Vogt (2005) have observed that tourism's externalities commonly manifest as social and environmental stresses occasioned by seasonal influxes of tourist traffic increased demands for energy and clean water, increases in waste generation, overtaxing of public infrastructures and psychologically related resident tensions. Particularly since the early 1980's concern regarding these issues has grown steadily giving rise to calls on a global scale for alternative approaches to tourism's development, alternatives that while acknowledging economic interests vested in tourism's development, would obviate or at least mitigate the industry's negative social and environmental footprint. In response, the UN World Tourism Organisation had initiated the concept of sustainable tourism subsequently ratified by its national

government membership (UNWTO, 2008).

However, evidence that this initiative had subsequently been implemented through the application of monitoring instruments such as the concept of Triple Bottom Line at destination community levels where tourism activity manifests has continued to be marginal (GRI, 2010; GRI, 2012a). Of note an earlier study by Ruhanan (2006) had investigated local government responses to initiatives regarding implementation of sustainable tourism in rural Queensland. The study was noteworthy for identifying a tendency to short-termism among rural municipalities regarding approaches to tourism planning. These typically acknowledged the merits of sustainable practice, but fell short of implementation due to the widespread perception that this would have the effect of dampening agendas calculated to maximise tourism's economic potential.

This position appears symptomatic of wider responses to tourism's development in Australia in which, despite UNWTO advocacy to the contrary, little more than token regard has been given to containment of the potential for negative social and environmental effects known to follow in its wake. But this has not been peculiar to Australia the primacy of political approaches to tourism that engender strategies for maximising economic growth have been global in scope. Notwithstanding this trend modest but progressive signs have suggested that the adoption of reporting standards for sustainable practices in the corporate arena have been growing with signs emerging of limited usage in the public domain (Williams, Wilmshurst and Clift, 2010). The principle that reporting for sustainability should be a consideration in policy formulation has also garnered support from a limited number of National and State government agencies attesting to increased awareness in that quarter (ANAO, 2004; ACT Government, 2011).

There have been growing indications that the concept of Triple Bottom Line reporting has emerged as the preferred instrument for ensuring sustainable outcomes throughout both public and private sectors with its use advocated by the Global Reporting Initiative (Faux and Dwyer, 2009; Williams, 2012). The Tasmanian Government's current economic plan has identified the importance of tourism (Goal 2), but also the application of the Triple Bottom Line principle (Goal 3) and by extension that the

State government has been cognisant of the developmental relevance of social and environmental sustainability (Tasmanian Government, 2014). The forgoing initiatives aside, the extent to which these reporting standards have subsequently been factored into the management of tourism at the local government level in Tasmania remain unclear. This study has sought to test the Tasmanian Government's proclamation regarding transference of the principle of social and environmental sustainability down to local government and their councils as it applies to the impacts of tourism. Additionally, it has sought clarification regarding whether such initiatives have been, wholly or in part, induced by diffusion of the UNWTO initiative urging the implementation of sustainable tourism among destination communities. Three factors whether singularly or in combination regarding the introduction of sustainable tourism are argued to be of sufficient importance to warrant the current study. First, the State's population is the most decentralised of all Australia's States. After Hobart the capital, just short of sixty per cent are dispersed among twenty-eight rural municipalities (DPAC, 2014). The demographics reflected in this statistic argue that consideration is warranted regarding Tasmanian communities and their sense-of-place as an integral component of the touristic experience offered.

Second, the relatively modest size of Tasmania's economy (BITRE, 2008) and its status as the sole island State determine its greater reliance on tourism. At 9.8% tourism constitutes a major component of the State's economy relative to 6% recorded for other Australian States (TRA, 2014). This factor argues strongly for the introduction of sustainable principles that can ensure the future integrity of socio-cultural and environmental standards on which the State's tourism is dependent.

Third, in consequence of Tasmania's unique status as Australia's only island state, the sociological characteristic of cultural cohesiveness has been identified as an inherent part of the Tasmanian experience. Stratford (2008) has argued that communities identify strongly with their sense-of-place (Adams, 2009; Tasmanian Government, 2013). In this regard, the collective impact from tourism influxes forecast to result from the Australian Government's *Tourism 2020* initiative warrant concern. While marketing documents have proliferated regarding the State's touristic appeal less has been forthcoming regarding a duty of care identifying its communities and their environment as tourism product. The heightened reliance bestowed on tourism as a

component of the Tasmanian economy and the importance of retaining its socio-cultural and environmental integrity as determinants of the tourism experience recommends that the gap identified in the literature regarding local government and local council perspectives regarding tourism and sustainability be addressed as a matter of urgency.

1.3 Tourism in Tasmania

Tasmania has continued to be the destination of choice for a significant number of national and international visitors annually (Government of Tasmania, 2013a) with the majority arriving by air through the State's main air terminals of Hobart and Launceston (Tourism Tasmania, 2013) but also by sea ferry from the Australian mainland. The State's capital and seat of government Hobart are located in the island's southeast while the second largest urban centre Launceston, is situated north on the Tamar River (Davison, Hirst and Macintyre, 2001). Geographically Tasmania is the most southerly of Australia's States, located approximately 240 kilometres off the southern coast of the State of Victoria at the southeast corner of the Australia. The island State's total of 68,400 square kilometres measures approximately 517 kilometres from north to south and 400 kilometres from west to east (Britannica, 2014). Tasmania's topography is undulating, with prominent outcrops of pre-Cambrian rock and with mostly well-drained soils improving to the north (Government of Tasmania, 2010). These soils support several forms of agricultural production including fruit and cereal crops, sheep and dairy farming. Much of the island's western side is listed under world heritage as a protected wilderness. Scenically, the island presents well as a focus for tourism with several of its natural features such as Cradle Mountain and Wine Glass Bay promoted as tourism icons to global tourism markets (Tourism Tasmania, 2013). Collectively, the varied topography of forests, pasture, lakes and a scenic coastline mark Tasmania as a generously endowed attraction for tourism (Tourism Tasmania, 2014).

In real terms employment in tourism accounts for approximately 40,000 jobs in the Tasmanian work force (TRA, 2014). The importance of tourism to the State is also identified in research by Tourism Research Australia, who advise that both Tasmania's west and east coasts are ranked five and six respectively in Australia's top twenty regions by economic importance of tourism (TRA, 2011). A Tasmanian State

Government report has drawn attention to the central role played by the island’s natural attributes in respect of attracting tourists noting ‘the Tasmanian wilderness and coastal environments are the strongest attraction for new visitors (Government of

Map 1: Tasmanian Local Government Areas



Tasmania, 2012:22). Recent tourism industry initiatives have coupled with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) to initiate Parks 21 a joint strategic

action plan designed to further utilise the State's parks as tourism product (TICT, 2014). Earlier, research conducted by Tourism Tasmania indicated that the Tasmanian wilderness and coastal environments were the strongest attraction for new visitors (Tourism Tasmania, 2011). During 2013 in excess of one million people excluding cruise ship passengers visited Tasmania. Of these approximately 435,000 came to holiday, 309,000 visited friends and relatives and 225,000 travelled for business or to attend conventions (Government of Tasmania, 2013a).

Tasmania's population, as of March 2014 was 514,700 (ABS, 2014a), of mixed decent and culturally and linguistically diverse (ibid). In 2001 the Tasmanian government passed the Tasmania Together Progress Board Act commissioned to make recommendations to parliament regarding the general welfare and wishes of the Tasmanian people. Ten years on the board of the Tasmania Together Plan had reported further on changes detected in community opinion (Tasmania Together, 2011). The Tasmanian Together initiative which bespeaks the cohesive nature of the island's society and its regard for sense-of-place has been recognised as a world-leading project in respect of cohesive community development (ABS, 2011b). The primary objective of the initiative has been to promote a sense of unity among Tasmania's population towards a shared future by officially acknowledging and keeping abreast of community aspirations. The Progress Board's positioning Statement 'Speak today, shape tomorrow' reflects of a cohesive characteristic shared among Tasmanian communities (Tinsley and Lynch, 2008; Adams, 2009; King Island Council, 2012; Tasmanian Government, 2013).

For the purposes of the current study Tasmania has provided the context and is broadly representative of Australian States in respect of its social and ideological evolution. To that extent the island State can be said to be culturally and politically representative of the Australian State system. Notwithstanding this, the Australian Bureau of Infrastructure Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE, 2008) has advised that although Tasmania is an Australian State it is also a regional economy. As such it continues to display several characteristics common to non-metropolitan Australia in which economic challenges are a recurring theme, noting 'As a small economy, Tasmania is subject to greater volatility and idiosyncratic shock' (BITRE, 2008:17). The State's government has also acknowledged that, relative to other

Australian States economic performance is less than robust (Government of Tasmania, 2013c). In the five years spanning 2008 to 2013 Tasmania recorded the lowest annual growth among Australian States in terms of Gross State Product (GSP) growing at a rate of 0.6% per annum (Tourism Tasmania, 2014) relative to the national average of 2.9 (ABS, 2014b). Tasmania's island status constrains its capacity to trade competitively and in consequence its subdued economy (NAB, 2013) has benefited significantly from tourism. After production of specialist metals tourism is currently the second largest component of the Tasmanian economy (Tasmania Top 10, 2014). The Tasmanian Government has identified tourism as a major component of the State's GDP, with a combined direct and indirect contribution to the economy just short of 10% (TRA, 2014). The primary components of the State's economy, agriculture, manufacturing, retail, education and tourism have continued to absorb the core of the State's labour force of approximately 248,400 (ABS, 2011a). Particularly in respect of growth in employment, accommodation, food services, transport, postal, warehousing and the retail trade have been the main industries driving employment in tourism (TSA, 2014).

1.4 Inquiry Aims and Research Objectives

The enquiry aims and research objectives for this study have sought to establish whether UNWTO advocacy that tourism should proceed sustainably has been integrated into local government policies and practices in the context of Tasmania. In respect of increases in tourism forecast to rise in Tasmania, caution is warranted regarding the potential for such a scenario in the absence of management for sustainable outcomes. The pro-growth policy agendas directing tourism's development in Australia have resulted from rational choices by government in response to globally competitive tourism markets. The neoliberal paradigm involved has required participation predicated on the pursuit of maximising economic advantage. The resulting competitive growth dynamics have situated the economic importance of tourism as oppositional to the developmental limitations suggested by environmental and social sustainability. The ideologically conflictual forces involved have induced a social dilemma broadly representative of camps favouring or opposing the maximisation of tourism's economic growth. Bramwell (2011) (see also Tribe, 2008) has pointed to the global scale of this dilemma and that the neoliberal pro-growth agendas appear determined to constrain the issue of sustainability, keeping it

in a state of suspension through endless debate. The dynamics characterising the ascendancy of tourism's market led growth have pervaded all levels of government as an economic salve. Scott (2000) has argued that the pursuit of maximising advantage in markets is the product of rational choices in response to the competitive environment in which participants have been required to operate. In such market environments, the inherent rationality determining choices must also be cognisant of the necessity of minimising costs that otherwise detract from maximising benefits. Bramwell (2011) has shown that sustainability is widely perceived by competitive tourism markets to constitute such a cost.

Following the inception of *Tourism 2020* implementation of planning strategies intended to grow share in international tourism markets and particularly Asia were intensified through government and industry incentives and representation. The neoliberal pro-growth mantra committing strategies for tourism's growth have emanated principally from the Australian Government in collaboration with individual States. For Tasmania, the fundamental arrangement between State and local governments has determined responsibility for the generation of tourism demand as the exclusive province of the State Tourism Commission (Tourism Tasmania). Conversely, the roll of custodian for the tourism product has fallen primarily to local government and its councils with responsibility for management of the majority of the island's topography. However, there is currently no understanding regarding municipal responses to the increased tourism volume forecast by *Tourism 2020*. While increased tourism traffic has been forecast to bring economic benefits to local communities the resulting footprint may also pose attendant threats to the social and environmental integrity of Tasmania's communities and their sense-of-place (Stratford, 2008; Tasmanian Government, 2013).

The potential for long-term disruption to communities and the environment from tourism influxes had furnished the impetus for diffusion of the UNWTO initiative and advocacy of more sustainable forms of tourism in destinations. But it cannot be assumed that the cohesive cultural milieu and sense-of-place identified as part of Tasmania's sociology will be sufficient to resist National and State agendas intent on maximising economic growth through tourism. In this the potential for conflict can be discerned in which the current universality of economic growth foists environmental

compromise upon Tasmania's predominantly rural population in the form of tourism influxes. Because the concept of sustainable tourism is situated at the crossroads of this dilemma, discussion regarding its scope and form was considered central to the objectives of this study. Two chapters are given over to a review of the available literature on tourism's political pro-growth advocacy and its counterpart dealing with sustainable development and sustainable tourism. A search of this literature failed to locate research data specific to local government in Tasmania, although it is argued that resolution of the conflict in question is of particular relevance to the future of communities in that State. The aim of this study has sought to address the gap identified in the literature by interrogating perspectives among Tasmania's twenty-nine local governments and their councils regarding responses to the presence of tourism and to what extent sustainable management practices have been pursued in deference to ensuring tourism does not exceed manageable limits and of maintaining the social and environmental integrity of its communities.

Rational choice theory was employed throughout the current study to explore the variations in perspectives apparent at different levels of government regarding the maximising of advantage and the minimising of costs. Choices regarding pursuit of maximising tourism's growth for its economic contribution, while rational come with consequences, one of which has been the potential to impact adversely on the fortunes of local destination communities through commodification of their sense-of-place as tourism product offered for consumption by visitors. The theory of rational choices, because it applies primarily to political and economic issues (Scott, 2000), is argued to be particularly amenable to the political economy of tourism and equally applicable whether considered in respect of National, State or municipal government policy agendas. For the current study the theory's principle value has been in exploring behavioural responses regarding the political economy of tourism where it has been harnessed to maximise and secure economic advantage by different tiers of government and by extension the nature of their responses to sustainable tourism.

1.5 Development of a Research Approach

Twenty-nine local governments and their councils have provided the focus for the case study pursued in the context of the State of Tasmania. The case study adopted a two-phase research design developed for the purpose of gathering and interpreting

local government and council perspectives regarding the determinants of approaches to both tourism and sustainable practice.

Phase one: Content analysis of twenty-nine local government strategic planning documents as secondary data.

Phase two: In-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with management personnel drawn from Tasmanian local government authorities as primary data.

For phase one, a content analysis was applied to interrogate secondary data in the form of local council strategic planning documents. The commonality of these documents, a requirement under a State Government Act stipulating a minimum five-year plan, was considered a suitable source for providing a uniform indication of the policies governing the way in which tourism and sustainability issues are reported to their respective communities as issues in municipal policy agendas. For phase two of the research, a series of thirty-eight interviews were conducted with local government employees. The objective in achieving phase two was to build a rich source of primary data regarding perspectives held by local government management as the principle custodians of the tourism product in the context of Tasmania. To this end a qualitative interpretive paradigm was applied and a level of candour in participant responses encouraged. The research design was structured to identify local perspectives regarding stakeholders, tourism, sustainability and community, data considered unobtainable by other means. In conjunction, data resulting from phases one and two provided the foundation for addressing the research question – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local councils and local government?* The research question has been augmented with the addition of two sub-questions:

1. To what extent has sustainable tourism been incorporated into local council economic development strategies?

The first sub-question sought to explore whether there was evidence that Tasmania's municipalities have been cognisant of the UNWTO edict advocating implementation of sustainable tourism at destination levels. The question also sought clarification regarding an edict generated by the Tasmanian Government on the imposition of sustainable practices and advocacy regarding the implementation of Triple Bottom

Line principles. The question also sought elaboration regarding whether Tasmania's State government tourism policies otherwise included directives regarding sustainability intended to influence municipal approaches to tourism's management.

2. To what extent have the principles of sustainability been incorporated into the Tasmanian local government decision-making process in relation to tourism's development?

The second sub-question sought to establish whether local government in the context of Tasmania have approached tourism's development holistically, in which its economic, socio-cultural and environmental effects on the communities concerned have benefited from a balanced approach from adoption of the principle of sustainable tourism. The UNWTO edict regarding the introduction of sustainable tourism was in response to evidence that growth in tourism when maximised for exclusively economic purposes had the potential to manifest as negative externalities. It is the inherent risk associated with tourism's excessive development that holds the capacity to compromise a community's sense-of-place both socially and environmentally. The importance of applying the concept of Triple Bottom Line reporting to destinations that host tourism has been that it affords the opportunity to monitor for balance in regard to tourism's social, environmental and economic impacts. The precept assumed added importance because the three components necessary for balance are unlikely to manifest consecutively. As tourism is first an expression of trade, the economic effects that result from its presence may become more apparent in the short-term. However, the socio-cultural and environmental effects also forecast to emerge may be related to a destination's inability to cope with tourism increases beyond a certain point and become manifestly obvious over the longer-term (Newsome, Moore and Dowling, 2002).

1.6 Overview of the Thesis Structure

The study has sought to contribute to knowledge by interrogating the perspectives of local government and their councils regarding responses to tourism and whether these have included consideration of management for sustainable outcomes in the context of the Australian island State of Tasmania. The primacy of neoliberal pro-growth free market approaches to tourism at National and State Government levels in Australia have been structured to maximise tourism's economic value in competitive global

markets. But evidence that subsequent increases in the generation of tourism demand has proceeded with regard to the social and environmental sustainability of Tasmania's local communities has remained unclear. Nor has this issue been unique to that State, but has constituted a broader social dilemma in which the relationship between tourism as the perceived panacea for economic growth and those who have sought to contain it to sustainable levels has assumed conflictual dimensions. The study has sought to probe these dynamics in the context of Tasmania by employing a case study to interrogate perspectives held among local government and their councils. The study comprises a further seven chapters and these are briefly summarised (Table 1.0).

Chapter Two -The Political Economy of Tourism has situated the economic status of tourism from global to local as a significant political force in a competitive free-market pro-growth environment and its resistance to attempts at containment. As an expression of trade tourism's development has also been shown to be a political instrument directed by neoliberal market orthodoxy. The discussion has identified governmental agencies at International, National and State levels each characterised by a similar discourse intent on maximising tourism's growth for its economic contribution. In respect of local governments and their councils it has been argued that destination communities because they constitute tourism product have assumed competitive characteristics in common with most other products available in market-oriented economies. In this regard Tasmania is used as a suitable context for detailed attention due to its unique topographical environment on which the continuance of tourism has been dependent. The discrete components that collectively constitute the structure of the State's tourism industry have also been examined.

Chapter Three - The Concept of Sustainable Tourism is considered the instrument of choice with which to mitigate the globally unsustainable growth of tourism. First the nature and form of tourism's negative macro and micro externalities have been briefly reviewed and their potential to damage the social and environmental fabric of destination communities. International and National government responses to the issue of tourism's globally unsustainable externalities have also been considered. It is shown that governmental pronouncements advocating sustainable practices for the tourism industry have made only marginal progress against the scope of the challenge

and have rarely moved beyond the rhetorical stage. Possible reasons for this have been discussed, noting that the neoliberal orthodoxy characterising pro-growth tourism policy agendas at all levels of government have dominated and remain ideologically opposed to the limits implied by the concept of sustainable tourism. It is argued that little is currently understood regarding perspectives entertained by local government towards tourism but also care for the environments on which it has depended. Two conceptual instruments have been considered, Triple Bottom Line reporting and the Precautionary Principle, both have been widely associated with the implementation of sustainable tourism and have been readily available to government.

Table 1.0 Thesis Structure

<i>Chapter One</i> Introduction	
<i>Chapter Two</i> The Political Economy of Tourism	
<i>Chapter Three</i> The Concept of Sustainable Tourism	
<i>Chapter Four</i> Methodology	
<i>Chapter Five</i> Analysis of Tasmanian Local Government Strategic Planning Documents	<i>Chapter Six</i> Review of Tasmanian Local Government Participant Perspectives
<i>Chapter Seven</i> Discussion	
<i>Chapter Eight</i> Conclusions	

Chapter Four – Methodology, introduces the research approach and the case study as the methodological instrument underpinning the study. It includes justification for the constructionist approach to the research. The discussion has advanced the argument for the primacy of local government and local council perspectives as the most relevant sources of knowledge regarding responses to sustainability and its relationship to local tourism. The forgoing elements which constitute the case study are achieved using the State of Tasmania as the context. Discussion also identifies the relevance of the information collected in relation to the study's research questions. A two-phase research design is introduced and explained in which the first phase undertakes a content analysis of municipal documents drawn from twenty-nine local councils. In phase two an inductive approach is discussed in which perspectives held by local government employees are gathered during the course of thirty-eight participant interviews. Discussion regarding phase two is supported by an explanation of the preliminary processes followed concerning the approach and participation of interviewees.

Chapter Five – The analysis of local council strategic planning documents is discussed. The secondary data extracted has been in fulfilment of phase one of the research design. The analysis was applied in three stages, with the first devoted to identifying primary themes using a word frequency count. These subsequently formed the basis for development of the *Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument* (TASEI) then employed during the second and third stages of phase one. Application of the instrument's thirty-two indicators, permitted a detailed image to emerge regarding local council preferences. The results from this process were then revisited as a collective, allowing for the final analysis that revealed the more discrete thematic aspects of tourism stakeholder influences, local perspectives regarding tourism and local perspectives regarding sustainability and community.

Chapter Six - Review of local government participant perspectives. The results and analysis of data are presented and discussed for phase two of the research design that involved the interview of thirty-eight local government employees. The discussion has centered on issues regarding tourism stakeholders, tourism, sustainability and community, but has also included the issue of awareness among local government regarding the concept of Triple Bottom Line a monitoring and reporting instrument

employed in the management of sustainable practice. Participant responses have been categorised into themes and sub-topics for analysis and comment.

Chapter Seven – Discussions presents and compares the findings of research phases one and two. These evaluative comparisons as the findings of the research have also been compared with the literature. Issues emerging from the study regarding tourism stakeholders, tourism, sustainability and community have also been discussed in detail. A theoretical perspective has been included in which Rational Choice Theory was used to explore the political and economic arena that has acted to influence the developmental directions of both sustainability and tourism and the potential for conflict to arise between the two.

Chapter Eight – Conclusions, draws together and presents conclusions drawn from the study. The two sub-questions have been addressed before addressing the primary research question. The study's significance and contribution to knowledge and to theory have also been presented followed by the study's contribution to practice, its limitations and the implications for further research.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter has presented an overview of the thesis and key concepts germane to the study. The background situated the state of play regarding the political economy of tourism, showing that the neoliberal orthodoxy driving market growth in tourism demand has continued to be in conflict with a UNWTO proclamation urging more sustainable approaches to tourism's management at the destination level. The inquiry aim and research objectives then sought to determine whether management of tourism occurring at the local council and local government level in the Australian State of Tasmania had integrated sustainability into their policies and practices or alternatively sought to maximise economic advantage. It was explained that the decision to proceed with the research using Tasmania as the context arose from that State's social and economic dissimilarities to other Australian States. The development of a research approach then outlined the choice of case study as the favoured instrument with which to achieve the depth of enquiry sought. The research question was posed – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?*

The method selected discussed the two-phase research design involving the content analysis of local council strategic planning documents followed by phase two and interviews with local government employees drawn from the management tier. There followed a summary of the thesis structure, chapter sequence and content. The chapter also identified Rational Choice Theory (RCT) as a useful theoretical lens through which to explore the motivating factors that have given rise to perspectives among local governments and their councils in response to the presence of tourism. In this the use of RCT was explained as being primarily concerned to explain behavioural responses to economic issues and by extension the principle motivations driving the political economy of tourism and its resistance to the principle of sustainability. The theory has also been utilised to explain variations in reciprocity regarding perspectives identified in responses to tourism by different levels of government.

Chapter Two

The Political Economy of Tourism

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the political and economic characteristics of tourism as they manifest in a competitive neoliberal market environment. It begins by considering tourism as an act of trade and in consequence the components that contribute to tourism activity, as product. In this capacity, tourism destinations have been argued to assume competitive characteristics in common with most other products in laissez-faire oriented market economies. Tourism is therefore contextualised in terms of the economic environment of which it currently forms part and in respect of Tasmania, the context for the current study, its political significance for that State's two levels of government. This the political economy of tourism is followed by a brief review of the neoliberal ethos that has served to perpetuate the global growth of tourism and to this end discussion also considers the multiple tiers of government involved. This thesis has argued that governments because they are required to compete for tourism share in neoliberal oriented trading environments are mandated to seek maximum economic advantage. The intensity in competition involved has found government organisations acting conjointly in pursuit of maximising tourism. Such approaches have been common among institutions from international down to the local, but it is argued have allotted insufficient attention to the negative social and environmental impacts associated with tourism's presence. The effects of this imbalance have already been well documented with conflict identified between the pro-growth economics of tourism and the social and environmental costs of doing so. However, in the case of Tasmania where tourism's economic importance has exceeded that of other Australian States, the issue has not benefited from focused research.

In pursuit of clarifying the economic motives involved Rational Choice Theory (RCT) was utilised to explore governmental responses to tourism in competitive market driven environments and how such agendas were likely to conflict with attempts to initiate sustainable tourism. RCT has proposed that particularly where economic transactions are involved both individuals and groups seek to maximise advantage (benefits) while minimising costs and that these actions in competitive trading

environments have been the consequence of rational choices. Contextualised as choices occurring rationally in response to participation in competitive tourism markets RCT has proposed that constraints imposed on the capacity to maximise economic growth, such as exemplified by the implementation of more sustainable forms of tourism, would be perceived as a cost detracting from maximising advantage and therefore resisted. This study has proceeded on the premise that Tasmania's twenty-nine local governments and their councils as active participants in competitive tourism markets would similarly be bound to respond to the presence of tourism and primarily for its economic promise. The dominance of economic considerations thus identified has brought into question whether the environmental and socio-cultural impacts of local tourism have been given sufficient consideration or have been perceived as conflicting with economic growth. To determine this the research question asked – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?*

2.1 Tourism as Product

Mowforth and Munt (2009) have noted that the tourism product broadly defined comprises those environments which when offered for sale by host communities and purchased by tourists constitute visitor experiences for consumption. This is particularly relevant in respect of the State of Tasmania which has provided the context for this study. The State's economic reliance on the continued presence of tourism has in large part been contingent on the quality of its environment as the tourism product. More generally Fletcher (2011) (see also Dredge and Jenkins, 2012) have argued that this economic activity results from financial transactions, a consequence of environmental social or cultural experiences consumed on site by tourists during visits to destinations. This basic premise undergoes further refinement when the experiences purchased as tourism product are segregated as either exogenous denoting scenery and topography (Govers, Van Hecke and Cabus, 2008), or endogenous, denoting services and amenities (Hong, 2009; Argent, 2011).

Reyes (2013) has argued that it is the perceived quality of place-dependent experiences in combination that have then determined the degree of economic competitiveness of tourism destinations when competing for tourist volume in tourism markets. Particularly in respect of Tasmania the island's pristine environment has

provided the core attraction and on which a significant portion of its economy has been based (Stratford, 2008). In this regard, the comparisons and judgements passed by tourists concerning the island's environmental quality has then determined the extent of tourism's future contribution to the State's economy. These tourist perceptions as value-based preconditions have been common to all destinations and helped in establishing the determinants of demand (Archer, Cooper and Ruhanen, 2005; Wheeler, Frost and Weiler, 2011). For visitors originating from offshore a flow of foreign currency is deposited into the host State's economy by purchasing the Tasmanian experience. Where such currency redistribution has included the usually larger Australian mainland domestic market tourism's aggregated contribution to the Tasmanian economy has marked it as a significant sector of the State's economy and holding significant political relevance.

2.2 The Political Economy of Tourism

Regarding the term political economy Black (2002:358) has advised that it is 'the political motivation of economic policies' where 'policy-makers and lobbyists are often more concerned with the income distribution than with the efficiency effects of policies'. Black is referring to the political attention given to aspects of government policies calculated to advantage the direction of economic strategies. Nunkoo and Smith (2013) have noted of tourism that particularly because of its significant contribution to national, state and local economies has found it increasingly influenced by government policies calculated to advantage economic agendas. Burns and Bibbings (2009) note that as early as the 1950s a growing number of national governments had been encouraged towards such policy formulation by international agencies that included the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the then World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and the World Bank Group. Hawkins and Mann (2007) have argued that these international institutions were already actively seeking socio-economic development through tourism policies. Subsequently Britton (1991:451) had argued that the growing economic status of tourism's development during the eighties had come to be identified as a 'major internationalised component of western capitalist economies'. Burns and Bibbings (2009) have also noted that since that decade and the resurgence of a neoliberalist free market discourse virtually all tiers of government have come to acknowledge and confer significant importance on the generation and development of tourism due to its economic relevance. Dredge and

Jenkins (2012) has drawn attention to the significant financial receipts resulting from engagement in tourism markets that have found it courted universally for its contributions to GDP (see also George, Mair and Reid, 2009; Fletcher, 2011). Burns and Bibbings (2009) have also argued that the economic importance of the tourism sector for most governments has become entrenched to the point where participation in competitive markets has become a mandatory component of economic growth.

Particularly as it applies to the majority of Tasmania's twenty-nine municipalities the relevance of tourism is similarly perceived in fundamentally economic terms and an assumed source for general improvement in the quality of life of tourism destination communities. But in real terms the State's diverse demographics have marked this as a somewhat more difficult issue to quantify. While tourism may have manifested as an investment and employment opportunity, expanded tax revenue base and economic diversification through to events promotion using cultural and natural attractions, it is unlikely these benefits have accrued uniformly to all municipalities. More generally, relative to Australia's mainland States the promise of these benefits has meant the opportunity for Tasmania to sustain a healthy capitalism for its modest economy (BITRE, 2008).

Commenting on the economic importance of tourism to government Macbeth (2005:968) has argued 'No matter how regarded, tourism is deeply political'. The scale of tourism's economic contribution in Tasmania has attracted involvement from a broad range of government agencies, organisations, enterprises and corporate stakeholders (KPMG, 2010) thereafter ensuring its political relevance. Airey and Ruhanen (2014) have argued that for Australia, of which Tasmania is part, tourism has continued to be the subject of specific government policies that thereafter have favoured their economic agendas. Ruhanen (2010) has noted that the effect has been to ensure tourism's central role as a source of economic growth by virtually all levels of Australian government where it has evolved as a cross-sectoral policy domain with far-reaching social and economic implications. Fletcher (2011) has also argued that while tourism has become the focus of widespread political attention particularly within the last three decades should not imply that it has proceeded in tandem with full accountability for its social and environmental impacts. The nature of tourism has marked it as naturally suited to trade in competitive markets in which vistas and

experiences constitute products to be purchased and consumed. However, Hall (2011) has noted that the nature of that consumption as the core expression of tourism in laissez-faire market environments has been its opposition to initiatives seeking to contain the damaging social and environmental excesses known to attend its developmental growth.

2.3 Neoliberalism and Tourism's Pro-Growth Discourse

The core ideological principle informing neoliberalism, a political descriptor favouring a laissez-faire market discourse (Larner, 2000; Geddes, 2005; Harvey, 2011) has argued that competitive market forces are inherently more efficient when freed from government regulations. Shone and Ali Memon (2008) have pointed out that deregulation and removal of subsidies have been considered fundamental to sustained economic growth and Bianchi (2009) has argued that as it has applied to tourism's global growth parallels can be identified between the re-emergence of neoliberalism beginning with the Reagan/Thatcher decade of the nineteen eighties and the exponential growth of tourism. Went (2000) also identified a clear relationship between neoliberalism, tourism and globalisation and particularly in respect of Australia. Buckley (2004) has observed that the principle that a free-market discourse and competitive economics should determine outcomes has since provided the overarching determinant for national and State governments when crafting tourism policies. Bianchi (2009) has also argued that the economic efficiencies inherent in the principle of free market competition have suggested that a reversal of the principle is unlikely and in Australia the political economy involved has resolved to harness tourism and its substantive engagement as an integral component of economic growth for the coming decades. The permanency suggested by this trend was reinforced by each of Australia's seven State and territory governments who have annually committed budgets to promote rather than constrain tourism's development as a source of economic growth.

The essential foundation on which neoliberal principles have been based date to Adam Smith in 1776 and have remained fundamentally unaltered (Clarke, 1995). They have been principally concerned to explain human behaviour during economic transactions and have argued that free exchange in markets require that both parties will necessarily benefit. Scott (2000) has advised that this assumption is based on the

belief that neither party would voluntarily engage in an exchange from which they would be disadvantaged. In respect of market transactions as they apply to tourism the principle also establishes a fundamental premise regarding the theory of rational choice (RCT). Choices made by governments when competing in neoliberal oriented markets exemplified by tourism will be based on the rationality of seeking to maximise advantage as the general political response (Boudon, 2009). Contextualised as the *modus operandi* for neoliberal free market economics, rational choice posits the maximising of advantage in pursuit of perpetual growth in which costs will be actively minimised. On this, Fletcher (2011) has noted that with the exception of a small number of totalitarian States virtually all national governments have acknowledged and subscribe to neoliberal principles as the prevailing global political orthodoxy.

Since the resurgence of neoliberalism in the nineteen-eighties the fundamental ideology has undergone reform in the way governments chose to approach tourism (Geddes, 2005; Larner and Craig, 2005; Marsh, 2005; Woods, 2006). More recently this was exemplified in the coupling of government and industry through the Australian Government *Tourism 2020* initiative in which the quest for market efficiencies led to the union of private with public arrangements as the core strategy for competitive advantage (Geddes, 2005). Dredge (2006) has drawn attention to similar arrangements existing at lower levels of government and where local governments have partnered with private tourism enterprises to increase competitiveness against other shires. Bramwell (2011) has argued that the generally competitive nature among destinations and its economic significance has singled out tourism as particularly amenable to the improved efficiencies suggested by management through such partnerships by governments that pursue pro-growth agendas for economic advantage.

2.4 A Theoretical Platform

The political economy of tourism and the pursuit of market led growth for economic advantage has given rise to competing perspectives regarding rational choices and that have resulted in social dilemmas. Fennell and Ebert (2004) have argued that the exclusivity of government agendas committed to maximise tourism's economic returns has generated conflict because the short-term economic agendas involved often yield social and environmental outcomes that leave destination residents

disadvantaged. This has occurred because while growth in tourism is prescriptive of economic growth the environment on which it is reliant is a finite resource. The dilemma has occurred where the continuance of tourism's growth is known to depend in the longer term on the very resource that is being depleted. The current study utilised Rational Choice Theory (RCT) to explore the political and economic mechanisms that have given rise to this dilemma. Soteriou and Coccossis (2010) note that the excesses of tourism giving rise to this scenario have spurred focused opposition from organisations such as the UNWTO and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) that have continued to argue the case for sustainable tourism and developmental restraint. When contextualised as a political and economic force Weaver (2011) has pointed out that tourism has presented a social dilemma for governments because of competing agendas that vie for particular developmental outcomes. The current study has argued that the dilemma is common to all levels of government because tourism is manifestly present at all levels of society. The solution lies in the capacity of governments to manage tourism responsibly for balanced outcomes as distinct from pursuing maximised growth. The purpose in using Rational Choice Theory has been to explore the ways in which this conflict arises and how it has served to oppose the concept of sustainable tourism.

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) is actually descriptive of a group of theories as distinct from a solitary theoretical model applied universally to explain empirical phenomena. Ostrom (1998:2) has praised the utility of RCT arguing that it is 'One of the most powerful theories used in contemporary social sciences. [It helps us understand humans as self-interested, short-term maximisers]'. Boudon (2009) points out that considerable debate continues regarding the determinants of RTC because its application whose genesis originated in response to economics relies on the basic premise that all human behaviour is rational. In instances where behaviour is deemed irrational the theory assumes a limited function. Notwithstanding this and for the purposes of this study the less contentious postulates or assumptions shared among this group of theories recommend their use as a vehicle with which to explore the essentially economic factors that have given rise to the competitive growth of tourism. Among the more relevant postulates as they apply to economic trading environments, Green and Shapiro (1994) have noted; the utility of maximisation, the structure of

preferences, decisions taken under uncertain conditions and the centrality of individuals in explanations concerning collective outcomes.

Boudon (2009) (see also Ostrom, 1998) has argued that Rational Choice is first concerned with maximisation in some form in which the rationality of actors is assumed capable of distinguishing between the costs and benefits of alternative choices regarding action and will subsequently choose the line of action presenting maximum advantage. Such motivations can be seen to parallel the neoliberal paradigm subscribed to by Australia's National and State Governments intent on maximising tourism's growth in competitive markets for the increased economic benefits assumed to follow. It is this competitive paradigm where maximised rewards come to constitute the exclusive agenda that then by extension generate opposition to alternative perspectives regarding tourism. But where the maximising of tourism is the exclusive objective the unsustainability of that action cannot be supported indefinitely by an environmental resource that is itself finite. By definition, because the latter and more moderate approach to tourism's management has advocated less rather than more growth it has been perceived by governments as a cost to be discouraged.

Boudon (2009) has drawn attention to a related assumption contained in RCT particularly as it has applied to economic growth in competitive environments. The pursuit of maximised advantage is assumed to proceed without regard for the fortunes of others and to this end actors are deemed capable of exploitative actions (Burns, 1972). This occurs particularly where the fortunes of others are perceived to represent a potential cost rather than benefit and considered to impinge on whatever strategies are selected to achieve maximisation. In this regard parallels can be drawn regarding promotional strategies designed to grow market share for tourism in Australia, which have appeared disproportionate to attention given to the social and environmental consequences of that action. Put differently, the social and environmental effects from increased tourism resulting from the concerted generation of demand by National and State Governments may be disproportionate to the infrastructural needs generated in consequence by the destinations affected.

In the forgoing scenario, a further postulate for RTC calls for evidence of a schedule of preferences. In respect of Australian Government tourism policy agendas this may manifest as an exclusivity of purpose in which attendant costs regarding the effects from generated demand on local communities are overlooked as a preference because they detract from maximising economic advantage. It may be inappropriate to suggest that government tourism policy agendas in Australia have been characterised by exploitative behaviour such as identified by Burns (1972). But, it is argued that assumptions that participation in competitive tourism markets have been void of such behaviour when committed to maximising market share is difficult to discount. This argument was driven home forcibly by Ostrom (1998:2) who alluded to the uses of RCT to predict 'marginal behavior in competitive situations in which selective pressures screen out those who do not maximize external values, such as profits in a competitive market'.

Green and Shapiro (1994) have identified a further postulate of RCT proposing that the intention to maximise outcomes will occur due to expected as distinct from known values. That is, because outcomes cannot be predetermined with total assurance conditions of uncertainty will always prevail that govern the way in which events subsequently unfold. In the example provided earlier regarding government agendas predisposed to seek maximum economic return from participation in tourism markets, Boudon (2009) has noted that such programs are similarly bound to proceed in an environment of uncertainty in which results cannot be predicted with confidence. For this reason, tourism strategies applied in anticipation of maximising results in the absence of guarantees are pre-empted by calls for market analysis choice of target audience and other data with which to minimise the uncertainty of results. The centrality of this postulate is implicit in the principle of sustainable tourism in which associated monitoring and reporting procedures have sought to counter uncertainties associated with tourism's accumulative affects in destinations. Fennell and Ebert (2004) have argued that the limitations implied by what is essentially a precautionary approach in the face of the unknown, has acknowledged that increases in tourism volume for exclusively economic ends have overlooked the social and environmental components of the tourism effect on communities. While the combined issues involved had been united by uncertainty at the outset, in other ways they were not equal. Whinam and Chilcott (2003) had noted that the short-term maximising of

economic gain as a consequence of rational responses to competitive markets were not commensurate with the accumulative effects of the exclusivity of that activity. This was so because the social and environmental consequences of excessive tourism at destinations were invariably slower to manifest, only emerging as irreversible circumstances in the longer term.

In the forgoing instance Scott (2000) has observed that consequences resulting from choices will always be determined by the sufficiency of available information. In this respect, rational choices are assumed to proceed in response to known circumstances regardless of whether or not these constitute sufficient information. As it has applied to local governments and their councils this postulate of RCT can be exemplified by the adequacy of information available regarding tourism planning that has then led to less than effective outcomes. This was confirmed by Boudon (2009) noting that the postulate does not seek to qualify the adequacy of the entity involved, but merely that its decisions are bound to proceed on available information. Similarly, in the case of local governments these may not be aware of their own information constraints regarding tourism, but nevertheless attempt to harness its promise in pursuit of economic gain.

Scott (2000) has suggested that rational choice theorists perceive social interaction as a process of social exchange. In this regard, economic activity is a process of exchange involving goods and services whereas exchange resulting from social interaction includes approval and related behaviours. Exchange theory concerns the analogy between economic and social relationships in human affairs that act to determine the nature and form of exchange as transactions (Emerson, 1976; Druckman, 1998). The parallels with tourism's economic activity and the rewards or punishments involved in social exchange have been that they were each motivated by the pursuit of minimising costs and maximising benefits. In this, rewards could assume a combination of monetary and non-monetary rewards and costs as the nature of exchanges. Exchange theory has proposed an explanation for behavioural responses that collectively account for a range of fundamental human responses involving rational choices that extend beyond the exclusively economic to embrace reciprocity (Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964).

2.5 Organisational Tiers Directing Tourism's Economic Development

The discussion now considers the near global participation of governments in pro-growth tourism markets in pursuit of maximising its economic contribution. In the prevailing political orthodoxy, the economic importance of tourism can be seen to determine policy agendas at all levels of government (Wanhill, 2005; Fletcher, 2011). The following discussion reviews four primary levels of government arguing that jointly and severally they have acted to exert influence on the competitive development of tourism as a focused strategy for economic advantage. Mowforth and Munt (2007:178) have referred to the, 'hegemonic discourse of [tourism] development...that pervade the supranational and national agencies'. In this regard, a common thread can be detected in which tourism has been cast as prescriptive for pro-growth economic policies regardless of the level of government involved. It has been argued that tourism as a vehicle for economic growth has not been tempered by concern for its responsible development, but rather the pursuit of maximised growth has been disproportionate to regard for the integrity of the social and environmental resources on which it continues to be largely dependent.

2.5.1 International Tourism Policy Authors

Organisations such as the UN, World Bank and International Monetary Fund, as intergovernmental organisations directing economic development have also pursued the promotion of tourism's development among member nations as part of a free market philosophy. Reyes (2013:145) has suggested that that philosophy has been concerned with increasing capital ostensibly to, 'pay off foreign debt, build infrastructure, boost employment rates and build a foundation for democracy'. However, Hawkins and Mann (2007) have argued that the track record of intergovernmental organisations directing tourism suggest these agendas have been less concerned with ethical issues than with capital derived from the political economy of tourism (see also Bramwell, 2006; Ferguson, 2007; Fletcher, 2011). The more notable among these international institutions have been the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) as the tourism industry's leading organisation and arguably its most influential body. That the generation of capital may have constituted the central philosophy underpinning this organisation can be gauged from the core requirement that its membership of nations have agreed to foster tourism's growth by raising demand levels for tourism internationally, nationally and

regionally and generally promoting industry competitiveness through national economic policies (UNWTO, 2014). Ferguson (2007:557) has argued that the role of the UNWTO can be considered in three primary ways: 'as a campaigning organisation for the tourism industry; as a donor for tourism development projects; and as the primary source of research and statistics on global tourism'. The economic focus implied has led to membership of the UNWTO being comprised of one hundred and fifty-six States, six associate members and over four hundred affiliate members from the private sector, tourism associations and local tourism authorities (UNWTO, 2014). Concern that the growing pace of tourism's development had given rise to unsustainable social and environmental impacts did not receive official acknowledgement from the UNWTO until 2002 and the *Contribution of the World Tourism Organisation to the World Summit on Sustainable Development* (UNWTO, 2002). A further six years would pass before official UNWTO advocacy regarding the introduction of the principle of sustainable tourism in response to growing concerns regarding the rising level of tourism's negative impacts (UNWTO, 2008).

Of the other intergovernmental organisations acting to influence tourism's economic development the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has set tourism policy guidelines for its member nations. George, Mair and Reid (2009) have noted that the organisation's forty-eight nation membership has actively sought to build economic capacity with the implementation of pro-active government policies encouraging travel (OECD, 2014). Similarly, Hawkins and Mann (2007) have noted that for over four decades the World Bank has been concerned to use the medium of tourism to facilitate global economic development. The function of the bank has been concerned to provide direct advice and thereafter to make available loans empowering the capacity of governments to manipulate development in pursuit of increased tourism. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also been able to exert influence over the direction of tourism's global economic development by making available selective loans to developing nations for growth in tourism in the form of hotels, infrastructure and related employment schemes (Burns and Bibbings, 2009). A further institution that has acted to influence tourism's economic development has been the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Easterling (2005) (see also Hong, 2009) has noted that the view of the organisation towards the economic merits of tourism's development, have been such that its developmental commitments

to that sector have exceeded those made to all other service sectors. In global terms the influence of its one hundred and twenty-five nation membership is counted as significant, particularly in respect of its ability to set the terms of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of which tourism continues to be a major part. One further organisation, The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has been noteworthy for its capacity to influence the economic course of tourism's global development. The WTTC is a non-government business forum representing the interests of the tourism industry's corporate operatives. Mowforth and Munt, 2009 have noted that the organisation has exerted considerable influence on the commercial development of the global tourism industry through its membership while also serving as a forum for the industry (WTTC, 2012).

The commonality unifying the forgoing international organisations has identified a predominantly economic focus sought to bear in influencing national government tourism policies towards maximising participation in global markets. The focus of these organisations has been that of fostering the furtherance of economic development among their respective memberships as participants in competitive neoliberal trading environments. Buckley (2012) has argued that in respect of such charters designed to direct tourism's development, the concept that growth should be actively moderated through the implementation of sustainable tourism in consideration of the natural environment has appeared untenable.

2.5.2 Australia's National Government Response to Tourism

In accord with the principles set by the foregoing international organisations of which most countries are members, national governments have conferred considerable attention to the economic development of tourism for its contribution to GDP (Burns and Bibbings, 2009; Kookana Pham, 2013). Ruhanen and McLennan (2009) have argued that in the example of Australia, national tourism policy has tended to favour a competitive market-driven schema designed to grow tourism's economic contribution. Within the Australian National Government, the actions of several departments have impacted on or otherwise influenced tourism policy; Tourism Research Australia, Tourism Ministers' Council, AustIndustry, Austrade and Indigenous Tourism Australia. Tourism Australia, the national agency mandated to promote the Australian product in international tourism markets is of particular note (Tourism Australia,

2011; TRA, 2014a). The predominantly market-driven focus pursued by Tourism Australia has been calculated to maximise the generation of tourism demand for the Australian product. But Faulkner (2005) has argued that its overtly promotional focus has rendered it open to criticism for being at cost to adequate attention directed to the quality of the tourism product promoted to international markets.

The resulting imbalance of prioritising tourism demand ahead of supply quality had prompted the commissioning of *The Jackson Report* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009) a critical review of Australia's tourism industry. The report identified a significant reduction in Australia's share of the global market and the necessity of addressing planning strategies sufficient to ensure a balance in the social, cultural and ecological quality of the product constituting the tourist experience for visitors. Subsequently, the report formed the basis of Australia's *National Long-term Tourism Strategy* (2009b) which reiterated the importance of a balanced approach to both demand and supply sides of the nation's tourism. The long-term tourism strategy was also intended to address the growth aspirations of the Australian tourism industry and subsequently provided the basis for the more recent *Tourism 2020* initiative which has claimed to integrate the findings of the earlier report. Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston (2012) have noted that the initiative's aggressive forecast has predicted the near doubling of tourism expenditures by overnight visitors to the year 2020. The initiative had singled out six strategic objectives for attention by government industry partnerships. However, these objectives were dominated by agendas intended to deliver economic growth while the environmental and social impacts forecast to occur from that growth appeared marginalised. Referring to *Tourism 2020* Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston (2012) have argued that clarification regarding the legislative frameworks, planning and tourism-related developments within Australian destinations sufficient for a promotional exercise on this scale had yet to materialise. Ruhanen (2010) has argued that the tourism industry's fixation with economic returns has been at cost to social and environmental issues and more generally that such economic preoccupations have been at a cost to the industry's strategic direction. But the possibility of policy reform that would favour a more balanced approach to planning for tourism nationally has continued to be constrained by discord between National and State governments. In this regard Ruhanen, Reid and Davidson (2011) have pointed out that this situation has persisted as a consequence of conflict between

the National government's financial dominance and the State government's jurisdiction regarding land use. Discussion now considers governmental influences directing tourism at State and Territory levels.

2.5.3 Australian State Responses to Tourism

Tourism in Australian States is directed under the auspices of the tourism commissions. These are statutory bodies formed by Act of Parliament in their respective States (Tourism Victoria; Destination NSW; Tourism Queensland; South Australian Tourism Commission; Tourism Western Australia; Tourism NT and Tourism Tasmania). State tourism commissions are mandated with budgetary allocations to grow market share in competitive tourism markets (Tourism Australia, 2013). Shone and Ali Memon (2008) have argued that this schema has ensured that thereafter competitive market forces are allowed to determine the development of the tourism sector in pursuit of bolstering the State's economy (see also Faulkner, 2005). In consequence, the arrangement subjects' local communities, cultures and environments to commodification as tourism product by tourism commissions fixated on increasing tourism demand for its economic contribution (Veitch, 2010). The commodification of local attractions and communities as tourism product promoted into interstate and global tourism markets can be interpreted as symptomatic of choices determined by government as rational responses committed to maximise economic advantage in competitive pro-growth tourism markets.

At just short of ten per cent tourism's greater contribution to the Tasmanian economy relative to other Australian States has been similarly dependent on the commodification of its local attractions and local communities and in this regard economic progress has been regularly monitored for comparative and competitive purposes (TRA, 2014b). However, while these activities have been monitored they have not been reflective of an overall strategic plan directing tourism's development in Tasmania. KPMG (2010) in its report *The Regional Tourism Review* commissioned by the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts (DEDTA, 2010) had drawn attention to a lack of direction in tourism policies in all Australian States. The finding suggested that while the economic status of tourism has received attention, the will to achieve balance between the economic, social and environmental facets necessary for coordinating development to a sustainable level has not been

forthcoming. The first sub-question for the study therefore asked *how do National/State Government tourism policies influence tourism's local development in Tasmania?*

2.5.4 Local Government Responses to Tourism

Ruhanen, Reid and Davidson (2011) have argued that while the role of local government and councils in tourism has been unreservedly acknowledged, it has also been overlooked. The effect of this oversight has been that too little is understood about the impact of National and State government influences on the functions of local government with respect to tourism's development. A further consequence has been that too little is known regarding whether the neoliberal orientation determining tourism policy at higher levels of government has acted to influence decision-making capacities of local councils. Concern to clarify this issue in respect using Tasmania as a context has been central to the purpose of this study. Whether National and State tourism policy agendas have intended to induce an exclusively economic approach among local governments and their councils. Their essential function as a local administrative authority for their communities has raised the question as to whether local government is sufficiently competent to participate in the inherent complexities of tourism markets (Tasmanian Government, 2013). Whether municipal responses to the presence of tourism have been confined to management of those physical and spatial domains impacted by visitors and this through administration, planning, land use and attention to infrastructure maintenance (Ruhanen, Reid and Davidson, 2011).

Bramwell and Lane, (2011) have noted that the concept of partnering with private enterprise has presented a viable alternative for local government administrations seeking to respond competitively in tourism markets. The trend to governance has signalled the progressive corporatisation of local tourism through increased private sector involvement in government decisions. But Argent (2011) has argued that the trend raises concerns because under such arrangements tourism policy formulation guided by local public private agreements has raised the potential to usher in commercial influences favouring economic over social and environmental considerations. The political economy driving the pro-growth mantra widely associated with tourism's development and of maximising economic gain, has also given cause for caution in that such arrangements would tend to identify with

financial returns associated with short-termism while subordinating longer-term strategies required to ensure sustainable community wellbeing. The growing array of stakeholder influence present at the destination level has warranted further caution regarding Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). Dredge and Thomas (2009) have argued that this is so because as they come to typify local development schema, the risk increases that the form and direction of tourism policy will be predetermined in favour of corporate agendas over community interests. On this issue Bramwell (2010) has also cautioned that many such agreements with local government have often been voluntary with no binding agreement in place implying that corporations that are party to such agreements would then be free to set agendas that would not legally binding.

2.6 Tourism in Tasmania

The importance accorded tourism as part of the Tasmanian economy has presented ongoing challenges for the State's government and tourism industry. These have centred on issues of management, marketing and the clarification of roles and functions and funding across five layers and eighty-six organisations that collectively constitute Tasmania's tourism industry (DEDTA, 2010). Regional tourism structures particularly have been the subject of seven major reviews since 1990 (KPMG, 2010) and were identified in a government commissioned report *Regional Tourism Review...The Way Forward* (KPMG, 2010). The report, which also applied to the Australian States of Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia with New Zealand the subject of similar reforms provided an analysis and summary of the challenges facing the Tasmanian tourism industry. The report argued that the State's industry was vulnerable to duplication and disadvantaged by fractured communication. The case was argued for organisational change that included structural reform and simplification of the number of organisations involved in the State's tourism industry. The report's principle importance has been to highlight rectifiable deficiencies within the State's tourism industry, but has also served to emphasise the absence of similar documents capable of introducing greater transparency regarding management of tourism's economic, social and environmental components. The focus of the current study regarding the perspectives held by local governments and their councils regarding tourism in Tasmania would be advantaged by a brief overview of the organisational structure of the Tasmanian tourism industry. The various interests

involved have been several but with each committed to foster tourism's developmental growth within the State for the economic benefits believed to result. A search had failed to surface documents of significance indicating that the social and environmental dimensions occasioned by the growth of tourism in Tasmania had attracted government focus.

2.6.1 Tasmanian Government Tourism Commission

The Tasmanian State Government Tourism Commission (Tourism Tasmania) has been mandated to promote Tasmania as a tourism product and by doing so to grow market share in competitive markets. This focus has encompassed both the other Australian States as its domestic market and internationally (Tourism Tasmania Act, 1996). This mandate has been achieved by applying strategic promotional campaigns in tourism markets and in particular Asia (KPMG, 2010; Austrade, 2015). To service the marketing, planning and development set by its charter Tourism Tasmania receives an annual operating budget that includes provision for promotional expenditures (Tourism Tasmania, 2013). The organisation's exclusive focus on demand generation suggests that the State's social and environmental status as a tourist product is perceived to be a stable and constant entity impervious to increases in tourism volume.

2.6.2 Tasmanian Regional Tourism Authorities

Regional Tourism Authorities (RTAs) refer to any of three organisations formed to provide leadership and developmental guidance for regions under their jurisdiction. Each organisation is in effect a promotional body mandated to maximise tourism's economic potential for its region. Each is market focused and oriented to tourism's growth.

The Cradle Coast Authority, a joint authority owned by nine member councils and with a broadly focused economic development charter. The authority has been charged with facilitating the region's economic development through tourism, resolving regional issues and coordinating regional-scale activity. The authority is comprised of a team of tourism personnel guided by the tourism executive responsible for creating local, regional and State partnerships and the implementation of strategies to further the region's tourism potential.

Tourism Northern Tasmania is a company limited by guarantee with eight local council shareholders guiding a broad charter of economic development. The organisation has been the region's foremost tourism development body an incorporated association governed by a voluntary board. The authority has been responsible for driving tourism's development in Northern Tasmania through strategic management planning. Tourism Northern Tasmania is an industry-led organisation funded by council membership and Tourism Tasmania.

Totally South Tourism is an independent not-for-profit association receiving funding from Tourism Tasmania and twelve southern councils. The authority has been responsible for implementing strategies to maximise the region's economic potential through increased tourism. The charter under which Totally South and RTAs operate has called for active encouragement of private investment in tourism, planning for sustainable development, marketing strategies and tourism industry education and training.

2.6.3 Tasmanian Zone Marketing Groups

Tasmania's Zone Marketing Groups (ZMGs) have resulted from a co-operative marketing initiative between State and the tourism industry. There are currently five tourism marketing zones, each with a brief to improve visitor perceptions of the State. These have been identified as Hobart and Surrounds, East Coast, Launceston, Tamar and the North, North West Coast and the Western Wilderness.

2.6.4 Tasmanian Local Tourism Associations

The twenty-eight Local Tourism Associations (LTAs) have been comprised primarily of local tourism operators as volunteers. The LTAs mandate has been to perform the function of representing the interests of local tourism businesses. Their central role has been that of providing a communication channel for local members, the RTO and Tourism Tasmania.

2.6.5 Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania

The Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania (TICT) headquartered in Hobart, exists to represent the Tasmanian tourism industry as an accreditation body. It has provided

focus as the industry's watchdog and served as a conduit for comment on tourism matters in the public domain. As the industry's accreditation body, the organisation also sets benchmarks for operating standards as well as service criteria among the State's abundance of tourism operatives.

2.6.6 Tasmanian Visitor Information Network

The Tasmanian Visitor Information Network (TVIN) is comprised of twenty-one centres located throughout Tasmania and identified by a symbol registered with Tourism Tasmania. Accreditation with TICT has been a requirement for membership of the network. TVINs primary function has been to provide assistance to visitors regarding bookings, but the centres have also doubled as marketing venues showcasing local produce and the promotion of regional icons (TVIN, 2014). The growing trend identified among visitors and tourists, of choosing to book online, has raised questions regarding the continued viability of Tasmania's Visitor Centres in their present form.

2.6.7 Tasmanian Tourism Industry Associations

Tourism Industry Associations exemplified by organisations such as Bed and Breakfast Boutique Accommodation of Tasmania and the Australian Hotels Association have maintained loose affiliations providing cooperative marketing opportunities for their membership and more generally for the benefit of members when participating in tourism's competitive service markets.

2.6.8 Tourism Industry Operatives

Tourism industry operatives at eighty-five per cent of tourism businesses have constituted the largest component of Tasmania's tourism industry (Government of Tasmania, (2011b). These have included larger accommodation businesses exemplified by hotels and hostels, tour businesses, tourist attractions, tourism related hire companies and small business accommodation operators providing five beds or less (KPMG, 2010).

2.6.9 Local Government Association Tasmania

The Local Government Association of Tasmania has provided specialist services to its member councils including policy and strategic support. The association has actively

canvassed for growth of the State's tourism sector through local government participation. It has also lobbied on behalf of its membership serving as a channel for dialogue with the Tasmanian Government on tourism related issues.

2.6.10 Local Government Managers Australia (Tasmania)

The Tasmanian chapter of Local Government Managers Australia is part of a federation making up a national membership. LGMA Tasmania has operated as an independent body representing over two hundred members. It has provided advice and support to Tasmanian local government on issues such as communications, human resources and legal/property issues through its special interest groups.

2.6.11 Tasmanian Local Government

By virtue of their administrative jurisdiction the State's twenty-nine local governments are positioned to exercise considerable influence regarding the shape and form of the tourism product. At the time of this study, ten of the twenty-nine municipalities had commissioned stand-alone tourism reports intended to serve a variety of purposes (Appendix D) and with others as signatories to Regional Tourism Agreements (KPMG, 2010). However, while individual municipalities have engaged with tourism their administrative mandate does not officially include tourism development. Individual agreements of cooperation drawn up between Tasmania's State and local governments in some instances include tourism, but have afforded considerable latitude for both parties while extolling the benefits of collaboration on a variety of issues. (Waratah-Wynyard Council, 2005; Central Coast Council, 2006; Latrobe, 2008; Meander Valley Council, 2009; King Island Council, 2012).

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the political economy of tourism locating it as an integral component of the economic environment in which it operates. Thus situated tourism has been shown to assume competitive pro-growth characteristics common to all market driven economies. The chapter has established that, compelled to participate in free-market competitive trading environments, where governments pursue tourism policies intended to maximise economic advantage they do so as a rational response to that market. It has been argued that for each governmental and organisational tier involved in the matrix of tourism's pro-growth market culture the commonality of

competitive rules have determined the market and ensured the maximisation of tourism's economic contribution for participants. This has been shown to be common to each tier of government from international down to local and purposed by the competitive pressures that constitute the tourism market. It has been argued that the rationality of competitive markets given to the pursuit of economic advantage in this way, count the associated but non-economic facets of tourism, namely its social and environmental impacts, as costs that threaten to detract from maximising economic growth. The conflict suggested by this a social dilemma while global in dimension is equally as relevant at the tourism destination level. While the literature has been replete with references alluding to the economic potential of tourism in the hands of National and State governments, less has been understood regarding local government perceptions in Tasmania towards both tourism and whether or not it would be amenable to the principle of monitoring tourism for sustainability. Whether it is the case that the political economy of tourism has been allowed to dominate local community sentiments or whether the concept that tourism can be managed sustainably has in fact been synergetic. In pursuit of answering this, this study asked the research question – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?*

This chapter has first sought to establish tourism as the essential preserve of political and economic interests in which transactional responses in competitive markets can be understood in terms of rational choices. In this regard by using RCT as a lens this study has proposed that tourism exchanges occurring in free-market economies have proceeded on the basis of maximising advantage while minimising costs. It was argued that tourism pursued in this way has the potential to exact a significant social and environmental toll by marginalising attention to the negative externalities known to occur in tourism's wake, the bi-products of market growth and activity. In this regard, the concept of sustainable tourism, because it has advocated moderation as distinct from the maximisation of tourism's growth, has been construed by pro-growth advocates as representing a cost and therefore to be marginalised. In the following chapter this issue and the remedial attempts intended to mitigate damage through introduction of the concept of sustainable tourism are examined.

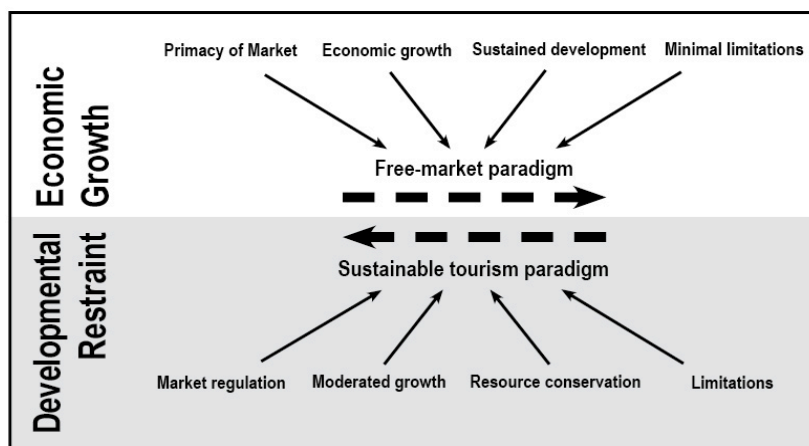
Chapter Three

The Concept of Sustainable Tourism

3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter the global political economy of tourism was interrogated, establishing that virtually all governments now participate in pro-growth neoliberal oriented markets and particularly the economic contribution offered by tourism. The subsequent externalities that have resulted from maximising tourism's growth under this political paradigm are global in scale and assessed by both the UNWTO and UNEP to be socially and environmentally unsustainable. The externalities concerned become apparent when the level of tourism experienced by destinations results in the depletion of the socio-cultural and environmental resource base on which it is dependent. The organisations concerned have responded by advocating the implementation of sustainable practices intended to curb tourism's negative impacts before they eventuate. But the concept that tourism should be managed for sustainable outcomes has implied moderation rather than the maximising of growth. This chapter argues that the concept that tourism should proceed sustainably is therefore widely regarded to be in direct conflict with governmental agendas that have sought to maximise tourism's economic contribution for competitive advantage in neoliberal market environments, a situation that led the author to develop the explanatory diagram in Figure 3.0.

Figure 3.0. Sustainability/Pro-growth Markets in Oppositional Tension



The diverging positions involved had given rise to diffusion of a UNWTO (2008) edict advocating sustainable tourism and intended to counter tourism's developmental excesses. Coffey and Marston (2013) (see also Seghezze, 2009) have noted that the term sustainability has subsequently entered the lexicon of government at all levels. But it should not be assumed that the concept of sustainable tourism as a counter to developmental excesses under a neoliberal paradigm has been of recent origin. The term was the child of earlier and related concerns regarding the environmental threats posed by the rate of economic development under the same paradigm. Sustainable tourism and its genesis sustainable development, were premised on the argument that communities could not endure where economic growth was allowed to exceed the resource base on which it depended. The current study sought to test progress towards tourism that was managed for sustainable outcomes at the local level of government and their councils in the context of the State of Tasmania. In this Australia's only island State significant reliance has continued to be placed on tourism's economic contribution and the political economy of tourism has committed to that industry's growth. But management of the social and environmental resource base on which tourism has been dependent has fallen principally to the State's twenty-nine local councils and local governments who are accountable for the tourism product. In the longer term the political will necessary to ensure the continuing quality of the Tasmanian experience will require that tourism's economic, socio-cultural and environmental facets are balanced and sustainable. This chapter has argued that while the excesses occasioned by tourism's growth suggest that the implementation of the concept of sustainable tourism is essential the challenge of doing so has remained contingent on resolving political and economic obstacles impeding its progress.

Opposition to the negative excesses both macro and micro currently associated with the exclusivity of tourism's economic development have provided the primary focus for attempts to implement sustainable tourism. But Buckley (2012) has argued that the relevance of tourism as a significant source of economic growth for all market driven economies has been unequivocal. And that the social and environmental problems associated with this anthropocentric activity have arguably arisen when governments in prioritising for maximum economic advantage dismiss or marginalise due regard for tourism's attendant impacts. Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston (2012) have argued that while virtually all governments acknowledge the necessity of mitigating the social

and environmental damage resulting from tourism activity the political will necessary for its implementation has been slow to evolve. There are also other issues, problems of operationalisation have further exacerbated the introduction of sustainable tourism blunting the concept's legitimacy when contending for equal status with the economic self-interest that governments have vested in tourism. This study has used Rational Choice Theory to explore the impediments to international, national and state levels of government's acknowledgement regarding the concept of sustainable tourism and why it may yet need to progress beyond the rhetorical phase for subsequent implementation in destinations. In pursuit of this the research question asked - *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?*

Discussion first reviewed the form in which tourism's externalities have occurred and the potential negative socio-cultural and environmental consequences known to attend tourism's development where its rate of growth had been unsustainable. Because the externalities in question have been global in scope, first the macro effects were considered as a source of atmospheric and related contaminants. Hernandez and Ryan (2011) have noted that these and that include air travel have been recognised as contributory factors in the climate change phenomenon. Thereafter, the various impacts known to occur at the micro or destination level and that have included contaminants associated with tourism influxes have been discussed. These had given rise to the UNWTO (2008) initiative advocating mitigation of tourism's social and environmental impacts through the introduction of sustainable tourism at the destination level. The favoured instrument for achieving this the principle of triple bottom line monitoring has required regular reporting at tourism destinations to ensure the economic, social and environmental impacts involved remain in balance and this is discussed later in this chapter.

3.1 Externalities Resulting from Tourism Activity

Helbling (2010) has noted of externalities, that the term was coined by economists to denote the indirect effect on society that resulted from consumption decisions by individuals. In respect of tourism this is known to manifest primarily as various forms of pollution termed negative externalities. Tourism-related activities consume energy generated from burning fossil fuels, generally as electrical energy produced by

anthropogenic activity that involves the burning of petroleum, gas or coal. In this process, externalities take the form of GHG emissions. Munday, Turner and Jones (2013) have noted that the measurement of these externalities has presented difficulties for all levels of government because for most destinations the social and environmental effects that result from tourism influxes only become apparent in the longer term as a consequence of the short-term economic benefits sought from hosting tourism. Seghezze (2009) has argued that the scope of tourism's impact has also held wider implications for communities where the externalities that result have the ability to disrupt the culturally constructed places where people live. These are known to include gentrification, degradation of the local environment and cultural change induced by the commercialisation of iconic sites each of which has the potential to disturb a community's right to its sense-of-place.

Particularly following the 1992 WCED summit in Rio de Janeiro (Amsler, 2009), there has been a groundswell of concern regarding the environmental unsustainability of economic development worldwide (O'Riordan, 2009; Buckley, 2012; Dredge and Jenkins, 2012). Hall et al (2015) have argued that the claim is supported by a growing pool of evidence that anthropogenic activity from industries and that include tourism have been responsible for changes occurring in the world's climate. Earlier the *Federal Australia Report, Risks and Opportunities 2010* (Australian Davos Connection, 2010) had identified the risks related to climate change as posing the greatest threat and in need of urgent policy attention. The report emphasised that while environmental factors associated with climate change presented an urgent concern they had also be considered in the context of the political, social and economic ramifications occasioned in the event of environmental catastrophe (Australian Davos Connection, 2010).

It is argued that the dilemmas presented by the forgoing scenario are not new. As early as 2002 speeches by the Secretary General of the World Tourism Organisation had continued to encourage economic growth through the vehicle of tourism in which its related impacts were wholly overlooked. But Burns and Bibbings (2009) have noted that by 2006 a more cautionary stance had emerged with UNWTO membership being advised on the extent of tourism's adverse social and environmental after-effects. Dredge and Jenkins (2009:16) have pointed out that this concern had

emanated from a growing pool of evidence indicating that as tourism had grown the resulting prosperity had also had the unintended effect of generating ‘leakages, disparities and impacts associated with negative externalities’ and this on a global scale (see also Jones and Munday, 2007; Schubert, 2010). This had occurred because externalities resulting from the expansion of the tourism industry were reflective of anthropogenic activity in which economic growth was vigorously pursued through participation in competitive markets.

3.1.1 Macro Environmental Impacts of Tourism’s Externalities

Historically, the link between climate change and tourism was officially acknowledged at a major conference convened by the UN World Tourism Organisation, UN Environmental Program and the World Meteorological Program in Djerba Tunisia in 2003 (UNWTO-UNEP-WMO, 2008). Dwyer, Forsyth, Spurr and Hoque (2010) have advised that this was ratified in 2007 by a similar convention in Davos Switzerland in which specific strategies were identified for the reduction of GHG emissions generated from tourism (UNWTO, 2007). At this juncture, the scientific evidence supporting tourism’s growing contribution to climate change had grown beyond reasonable doubt. However, Gossling (2013) has argued that among national governments tourism policies that might deal with the effects of tourism on climate remained largely non-existent and urgent action regarding legislation remained overdue. Despite the political lethargy implied by the lack of governmental action, Dwyer, Forsyth, Spurr and Hoque (2010) estimate that between five and fourteen per cent of anthropogenic activity contributing to climate change has resulted from tourism’s externalities with CO² increases from that source forecast to rise by two and a half per cent annually to 2035. The scope of externalities associated with environmental damage from tourism are primarily comprised of atmospheric, ocean and freshwater pollution (Gossling & Schumacher, 2010; Gossling et al., 2011). Weaver (2011) has argued that a search of the CABI direct database was sufficient to identify that authors have been unanimous in their view that anthropogenically generated climate change has become a reality holding the potential to impact on all tourist destinations. The reason for the paucity of action on the part of national governments possessed of the necessary power and sufficient expertise to address this issue has continued unaddressed. By 1995 the UNEP had identified the following three primary areas of environmental concern attributable to tourism activity:

1) *Depletion of natural resources*: tourism development can impoverish resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already scarce. Water is the main resource at risk because it is usually overused and wasted by tourists (for personal use), and for tourist facilities (hotels, swimming pools, golf courses etc.). The problem becomes even more serious in dryer regions where it can result in water shortages and degradation of water supplies. The same problem occurs for local resources like energy, food and other raw materials that may already be in short supply. Forests for example are threatened by deforestation caused by fuel wood collection and land clearing.

2) *Pollution*: the tourism industry produces the same forms of pollution as any other industry: solid waste and littering, air emissions, noise, releases of sewage, oil and chemicals, dispersion of toxic substances and even architectural and visual pollution. As a consequence of greater tourist mobility transportation is responsible for an important share of air emissions and noise pollution. In addition to causing annoyance, stress and local air pollution, it causes distress to wildlife especially in sensitive areas. Another serious problem is waste disposal, especially improper disposal can degrade the physical appearance of scenic areas, roadsides, rivers, lakes and seas causing the death of marine animals. The same problem can be worsened by sewage pollution threatening the health of both humans and animals. Besides this it is often followed by the domination of resorts of disparate design that fail to integrate with the natural features and indigenous architecture of the destination.

3) *Physical impacts*: the physical impacts of tourism endanger the species-rich ecosystems of the local environment. The most fragile ecosystems are usually the most attractive for tourists and the most affected by this interaction. The threat to local ecosystems comes from tourism-related land clearing and construction and by continuing tourist activities and long-term changes in local economies and ecology.

3.1.2 Micro Impacts of Tourism's Externalities

Given that the more overt manifestation of tourism's externalities has occurred at the destination level it is the community that has best served as a unit of analysis with which to advance an understanding of the social, environmental and economic role played by tourism. In particular the anthropogenic activity generated by tourism's

presence at destinations has suggested that the potential for negative externalities should be an occasion for significant concern and one in which planning for sustainable tourism is designed to mitigate the effects. In the example of Tasmania because several tourism destinations can be counted as equally vulnerable to such effects the second research sub-question asked - *to what extent have the principles of sustainability been incorporated into the Tasmanian local government decision-making process in relation to tourism's development?*

Schubert (2010) has argued that at the destination level tourism's social and environmental impacts have presented a central irony that embodied in the wake of tourism's actualisation the externalities that result have then acted to deplete environmental and other resources on which it was dependent. Beeton (2006:2) has concurred with this dilemma arguing 'a primary paradox of tourism is that it carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction'. This has inferred that the destination's decline is precipitated when certain carrying capacities are exceeded or where the intensity of visitor traffic has exceeded the environment's ability to cope beyond what is referred to as the limits of acceptable change (Newsome, Moore and Dowling, 2002). This has been particularly applicable to communities subjected to influxes of visitors and excessive exposure to impacts associated with tourism's developmental growth. Bailey and Richardson (2010:369) have argued that tourism's externalities are generated whether singularly or in combination as a consequence of three effects; (1) property rights that bestow the right to the use of natural resources, (2) negative environmental, social and cultural impacts resulting from tourist behavior and (3) the development of infrastructure occasioned by tourism's growth.

The premise on which this has been grounded is detailed further by Briassoulis (2015) who has argued that when the development of infrastructure, commensurate with community size is then shared in common with a significantly expanded seasonal community of tourists a common pool resource results and in consequence stress related characteristics within communities. The current study has argued that communities are subjected to such pressures when National and State Governments actively generate tourism demand, but marginalise sufficient regard for its resulting effects on destinations. In this regard Mowforth and Munt (2009) have also argued that communities have frequently been cast as the tourism resource to be experienced,

commodified by both industry and government intent on fulfilling economic agendas for growth. In a related comment Sofield (2003) had earlier argued that only when community empowerment results from successfully combining with the political forces of the State is tourism likely to serve as a developmental tool beyond that measured solely by profit.

3.2 The Concept of Sustainable Development

The history of the evolving framework that constitutes the concept of environmental sustainability can be sourced to as early as the 1960's a subset of green politics (Dobson, 2000). By the advent of Earth Day 1970 the term had become institutionalised (O'Riordan, Clark, Kates and McGowan, 1995) and by the early nineteen eighties the concept of sustainable development had been integrated with the World Conservation Strategy (IUCN, 1981). Six years later at the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) the concept of planning for sustainable outcomes had received global recognition with publication of the Brundtland Report '*Our Common Future*' (Murphy and Price, 2005; McAreavey and McDonagh, 2010). Subsequently, Baker (2008) had noted the issue of sustainable development was singled out for special attention at the G7 Summit in Paris in 1989. By 1991 the term 'sustainable development' had garnered increasing popularity as the term best encapsulating the growing counter movement opposed to global environmental degradation (Rockefeller, 1996). Thereafter, sustainable development was accorded leading status at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (UNCED, 1992).

Schreurs (2012) has noted of this the Rio Summit that it had attempted to supplant the prevailing political emphasis on economic growth with that of sustainable development enshrined in Agenda 21 and espoused by the Brundtland concept (see also Aall, 2014). Amsler (2009) has argued that the primary objective of the conference had been to corral the attention of national and supra-national government agencies to growing concerns regarding depletion of the world's environmental resource base as a direct result of exploitation under a free market discourse. However, Soteriou and Coccossis (2010) have noted that a key proposal tabled at the summit, that national governments implement a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) a mechanism by which the concept of sustainability could be

translated into policy form was met with limited enthusiasm. A further proposal tabled by the United Nations was that national governments regard environmental degradation and depletion as an economic cost of production to be subtracted from GDP (UN, 2002). The proposal followed broad acknowledgement that GDP as an economic reporting convention failed to account for crucial aspects if economic growth was to proceed sustainably. By otherwise taking cultural and natural resources for granted GDP had in effect ignored the consumption of natural resources while further compromising cultural resources (Choi and Sirakaya, 2006).

3.2.1 Defining Sustainable Development

Davison (2008) has argued that because the concept of sustainable development has resisted definition it has attracted a plethora of alternatives. This situation had arisen because the terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’ have expressed the idea of achieving a balance between social, environmental and economic considerations. Roper (2011) has argued that the inherent difficulties generated have led to a range of variations that continue to contest the term’s interpretation. This can be exemplified by the steady-state implications of ‘sustainable’ which when coupled to the growth implications embodied in ‘development’ suggest an oxymoron while when considered separately the terms tend to assume mutual exclusivity. The most frequently quoted definition had emerged during the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987). The definition, enshrined in the commissions capstone document *Our Common Future* proposed that sustainable development was ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (WCED, 1987). However, imprecision has continued to characterise attempts to establish a suitable definition for sustainable development. Bramwell (2011) has argued that the problem is essentially political and reflected in the nature of the oppositional stance adopted by governmental pro-growth advocacy that has allowed the issue of sustainability to be kept in a state of perpetual suspension where it has been rendered harmless.

3.2.2 Issues arising from the Concept of Sustainable Development

Tensions between the dominant neoliberal imperative driving economic growth and mounting pressure to address the environmental and social problems arising in its

wake have given voice to new and critical discourses advocating radical change to the prevailing political and economic system. Coffey and Marsdon (2013) have argued that at the heart of the problem is that of competitive consumption and the aggressiveness of current market fundamentalism under a neoliberal pro-growth orthodoxy in which social cultures have become increasingly committed to an ideology of consumerism. Higgins-Desbiolles (2010) has argued that the paradigm appears sufficiently entrenched in the social consciousness as to require an overt and direct challenge to its unsustainability before it becomes possible to supplant it with an alternative and more sustainable system.

3.3 The Concept of Sustainable Tourism

O’Riordan (2009) has noted that at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit nine objectives for governments and ten for the private sector were tabled as *Agenda 21* very little of which at that time was directed to promoting the attainment of sustainability in the tourism industry. In that year the Australian government also responded with the development of the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (NSED, 1992) a central component of which featured the appointment of a working group tasked with examining the relationship between tourism and the Australian environment. However, it was not until 1996 that *Agenda 21 for Tourism* was produced through the auspices of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 1997). Aall (2014) has noted that thereafter the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) moved to amend the near omission of tourism from Agenda 21 at the Rio Summit by including it on the agenda of the follow-up conference scheduled for the World Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002. Hall (2011) has argued that from this point the term ‘sustainable tourism’ provided the platform for advancing the importance of achieving a balance between the economic, socio-cultural and environmental facets of tourism. International organisations that have included the UNWTO, UNEP and WTTC have since acted to ensure that the concept of sustainable tourism has continued as the developmental paradigm of choice with which to confront the issue of tourism’s externalities.

Subsequently, the importance of pursuing the sustainable development of tourism had resulted in a plethora of initiatives and joint exercises. Hall (2011) has noted that these had included the Tourism Local Agenda 21 (UNEP, 2003), WTTC Agenda 21

and the International Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development (UNWTO/UNEP, 2009). Similarly, the International Council of Cruise Lines, the Federation of Tour Operators and the International Hotel and Restaurant Association had also entered into such arrangements (IFTO/IH&RA, 2002). The principle of sustainable tourism was also included in several national and regional government tourism policy documents that date from that time (Hall, 2011). Burns and Bibbings (2009) have noted that particularly from 2006 public statements issued by the UNWTO and thereafter confirmed by the Davos Declaration pointed increasingly to common agreement regarding the need to address the negative environmental and social impacts associated with tourism.

The logic implicit in the forgoing history of sustainable tourism evolving from the earlier sustainable development has argued that they are premised on core tenants in common. Widespread recognition of the unsustainability of tourism's externalities has found them progressively integrated into the sustainable development debate (Sharpley, 2009). Indeed Olsson (2009:127) has argued that the concept of sustainable tourism has intoned axiomatic values in common with global sustainable development such that they have become a 'global idea-complex'. The steadily accumulating evidence identifying global developmental excesses have argued the case for the implementation of sustainable practices. However, political advocacy committed to pro-growth economics has continued to resist acknowledgement of tourism's negative externalities. Tribe (2008) has argued that pro-growth advocacy has succeeded in muting the sustainable tourism debate by reframing it in rational scientific and technical terms. And Hall (2010) has argued that despite substantial attention afforded the issue of sustainability in the form of publications, plans, and conferences since the decade of the eighties tourism is perhaps less sustainable now than then.

3.3.1 Difficulties Regarding Definitions of Sustainable Tourism

The World Tourism Organisation task force (WTO, 1993) mandated to develop international indicators for sustainable tourism had stopped short of providing a prescriptive definition of sustainable tourism on the grounds that any definition would have to be site or destination specific. The unintended legacy of this pronouncement had been to deny both industry and academia the necessary benchmarks with which to proceed. The implicit impart of this edict has been that operational effectiveness must

ultimately rest on the ability of each destination to monitor its own implementation and compliance. The legitimacy implicit in this approach was based on the belief that the concept otherwise lacked metrics necessary to calculate the success or otherwise of the application of sustainable principles where tourism occurred (Garrod and Fyall, 1998). Soteriou and Coccossis (2010) have argued that there continues to be a general absence of consensus in the research literature able to locate sustainable tourism in terms other than approximate, that sustainable tourism has for the most part progressed little beyond rhetoric that has embraced a theoretical concept. Similarly, Ruhanen (2008:435) has argued that the persisting illusiveness of a definition capable of advancing sustainable tourism beyond its theoretical confinements to that of operationalisation has recommended it as 'an intellectually appealing concept with little practical application'. The protracted debate regarding a definition for the term 'sustainable tourism' may have stemmed from its parental concept 'sustainable development' which has been similarly constrained by imprecise descriptors (Tyrrell and Johnston, 2007; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2011). Moscardo and Murphy (2014) have questioned the definition intended for sustainability arguing that when fused to tourism the result could be interpreted as implying the application of strategies designed to sustain the tourism industry as distinct from the imposition of limits advocating social and environmental protection. But the global scale of the issue coupled to its urgency has argued that at the very least terminology implying that tourism proceeds within the context of sustainability has disconnected it from assumptions that development should be allowed to proceed free of constraints.

3.3.2 Issues Arising from Application of the Concept of Sustainable Tourism

Ruhanen, Reid and Davidson (2011) have argued that the ability to proceed with tourism planning platformed on the concept of sustainability has been compromised by the absence of legislative and regulatory guidelines. They point to the example provided by Australia where the legal framework on which sustainable tourism planning could proceed has presented as ambiguous and characterised by confusion with over two hundred separate pieces of legislation that has alternately supported or hindered tourism planning initiatives. Earlier, Ko (2005) had argued that support for the concept of sustainable tourism had persisted due to the absence of alternatives capable of adequately addressing the scope of the footprint left in the wake of unregulated tourism. To be effective in application sustainable tourism would require

a framework capable of explaining what, for whom and to what degree those elements selected would be sustained. For implementation of sustainable tourism at the destination level to have effect should be contingent on incorporation of such coordinates (Soteriou and Coccossis, 2010). Tyrrell and Johnston (2007) have argued that without such fundamental input the concept of sustainable tourism would lack the firm ground necessary for its effective translation into practice.

Mowforth and Munt (2009) have suggested that the viability of sustainable tourism in real terms has also been challenged due to the persisting reticence displayed by both government and industry as a general response to its introduction. While the term has been widely praised for its moral undertones for the most part Buckley (2012) has argued that it has provided a licence to continue business as usual and that the prevalence of corporate and governmental responses acquiescing to the sustainability initiative have amounted to 'greenwash' a derogatory term denoting environmental disinformation. Bramwell (2006: 974) had also argued that such political and economic agendas have appeared commonly at the core of 'proclamations that announce environmental guardianship and advocacy of sustainable principles in respect of tourism's development'. Nevertheless Hall (2011) has argued that proliferation of the concept among factions of government and industry has assumed some success. But it has been the continued growth of tourism in unsustainable forms leading to environmental damage that has tended to confirm the resiliency of the political and economic stance against sustainable tourism. Discussion now turns to local government as the suitably located authority with the capacity to monitor and report on the practical integration of sustainable principles at the tourism destination level.

3.3.3 Public Sector Responses to Adoption of Sustainable Tourism

Public sector responses to tourism and of sustainable planning are not new, but rather have been the latest in a legacy of regulatory tools. Newsome, Moore and Dowling (2002) have identified various instruments pre-dating the concept of sustainable tourism that had been developed and applied with varying degrees of success. These represented successive attempts to mitigate stress on ecologically sensitive destinations popularised by tourism (Saarinen, 2006). The majority of these instruments were designed to monitor carrying capacities and visitor impacts as a

prelude to implementing natural resource management practices (Archer, Cooper and Ruhanen, 2005). The most widely utilised have been the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), Visitor Activity Management Process (VAMP), Visitor Impact Management (VIM), Visitor Experience Resource Protection (VERP) and the Tourism Optimisation Management Model (TOMM). While each of these have been applied with some success in all cases implementation has been hampered by persisting uncertainties, legal issues and terminology.

In 1997 the Australian government initiative the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) had advocated the concept of sustainable tourism planning. By 2006 the STCRC (since disbanded in 2010) had initiated a national interactive dialogue with local government using the survey document *Achieving Sustainable Local Tourism Management* (Dredge, Macbeth, Carson, Beaumont, Northcote and Richards, 2006). The purpose of the two-part survey instrument was designed to engage with local government throughout Australia towards the integration of sustainability in the tourism planning process. Two years on the STCRC had published the findings in a report *Analysis of National, State, Regional and Local Tourism Strategies and Plans: Identification of Strategic Issues* (McLennan and Ruhanen, 2008). The document identified that despite initiatives designed to highlight the advantages of sustainable tourism planning practices State and local government preoccupations with economic growth through market participation had continued to resist its implementation. The source of resistance particularly on the part of local government stemmed from reservations regarding the desirability of imposing limits to tourism's growth. The probability that this has typified local government responses is given substance by Bramwell and Lane (2011:416) 'There have been notable tensions between national policies encouraging sustainability and the problems that occur because economic development priorities are still dominant, particularly at the local scale'. The final report of the STCRC Legacy Project *Australian Tourism Sustainability Performance Indicators* published by the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF, 2011) had suggested the report's findings remained constrained by theoretical projections with the admission that both content and conclusions awaited trialling.

3.4 Matters Arising from Application of Sustainable Tourism Indicators

Brozovic and Schlenker (2007) have argued that managing to mitigate tourism's environmental impacts has also come with attendant risks. This has occurred because planners engaging with the problem were unlikely to establish with certainty the resilience threshold beyond which a tipping point was reached where change to the environmental system then became irreversible. The possibility has added focus to the necessity of establishing specific guidelines on which to implement sustainable tourism and has assumed an increased urgency particularly in light of the accelerating rate of environmental damage associated with economic growth and the level of uncertainty involved (Stewart, Draper and Johnston, 2005; Holden, 2009). Earlier Garrod and Fyall (1998) had suggested the establishment of a framework with which to measure progress towards implementation of sustainable tourism that employed conventional accounting procedures to track capital stock of the tourism product. Similarly, Figge and Hahn (2005) had argued for a Constant Capital Rule by which sustainability could be achieved by managing the resource base in such a manner that use by the present generation would subsequently endow future generations with an equivalent resource stock. Both proposals have offered parallels with the intergenerational agenda advocated in the Brundtland Report *Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987). But both arguments were also premised on sociological rather than environmental criteria and did not address the tolerance levels of ecosystems challenged by disturbance which have the potential to exceed tipping points. Tyrrell and Johnston (2008) have argued that environmental systems affected in this way have risked degenerating into a qualitatively different state which become irreversible. At this juncture, was considered instructive to review the two primary instruments acknowledged as theoretically capable of moderating tourism's development to within sustainable levels.

3.4.1 Sustainable Tourism and the Triple Bottom Line Concept

The concept of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), a management tool suited for the implementation of sustainable tourism had its genesis in corporate responses to shareholder concerns that companies should beyond financial performance demonstrate accountability for their social and environmental practices. Deegan, Cooper, and Shelly (2006) have noted that the Triple Bottom Line concept has since attracted global recognition as the tool of choice with which to monitor and report on

sustainability for both corporations and government (GRI, 2010; GRI, 2012a; GRI, 2012b, GRI, 2013). Faux and Dwyer (2009) have also argued that the primary attribute of TBL has been its inherent capacity for adaptability to destination specific projects and therefore suited for the implementation and management of sustainable tourism (see also La Lopa and Day, 2011; Tyrrell, Paris and Biaett, 2013).

Originally developed by Elkington (1998) TBL proposes that because organisational entities such as governments and corporations are inseparable from the social fabric within which they operate it is appropriate that beyond financial reporting they should be held accountable for their social and environmental footprint (Bailey and Richardson, 2010; Slaper and Hall, 2011). The initiative first assumed relevance in light of contributions to environmental degradation by large corporations and more particularly their carbon footprint in the form of GHG emissions (GRI, 2012b). A central tenet of the concept has been that organisations as an article of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) have a duty to accommodate not only shareholders, but stakeholders as the extended circle of people, groups and communities affected by the organisation's actions as a functioning social entity. As such, the rule has more generally applied to organisations, institutions and government and their responsibility for demonstrating accountability to the wider community.

Killian (2012) has noted that the UN Global Compact for CSR has made available guidelines for voluntary subscription by organisations that has ensured ethical practice. But of the several and earlier initiatives coalescing as the concept of CSR that of TBL reporting has since gathered legitimacy as the pre-eminent instrument for organisations that have sought to monitor sustainability. An increasing number of government organisations in Australia have adopted TBL (ACT Government, 2011; Feiden, 2011; Williams, 2012) and Williams, Wilmshurst and Clift (2011) have argued that because the public sector accounts for approximately forty per cent of economic activity adoption of TBL that would ensure sustainable practices should be regarded as a priority. Particularly because they are directly linked to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their communities, local governments have been ideally located to initiate such a reporting trend.

Application of TBL particularly in respect to local government responses to tourism

have provided the ability to better interpret the dynamics of sustainability. Faux and Dwyer (2009) have argued that TBL's adaption to a variety of tourism settings as a monitoring and reporting instrument has resulted directly from the tendency for tourism to commodify as a resource the natural and social environments on which it has settled. They have pointed to TBLs three reporting considerations as inextricably linked to the improvement of financial bottom line traditions. Financial success has been reliant on social and environmental sustainability before economic sustainability could be legitimised. In this respect TBL was ideally suited for tourism's management due to its inherent efficiencies. Tyrrell, Paris and Biaett (2012) have also noted that the concept has provided the capacity to plan strategically on the basis of known outcomes and therefore can promote improved stakeholder relationships. TBL is therefore of particular value as a management tool for tourism's development and the principle on which sustainable tourism can proceed. Ruhanen, Reid and Davidson (2011) have argued that the advent of the concept of sustainable tourism has broadened the perimeters previously set for destinations when approaching the question of tourism planning. They have noted that since the Brundtland Commission's edict much of the academic inquiry into tourism destination planning has been focused on the degree to which tourism destinations adequately address planning processes, the triple bottom line and in other ways accommodate the growing issue of sustainability.

Tyrrell, Paris and Biaett (2012) have noted that numerous agencies globally are now required to implement TBL as a reporting tool, but in respect of its integration it has fallen to the State and local government to deliver the principle of sustainability via policy and planning. In Australia, the precedent for this has already been established in NSW by the O'Neill Report (2008) and in Victoria the Government inquiry into rural and regional tourism (Parliament of Victoria, 2008). Both reports have identified the desirability of tourism destinations and communities being monitored using the principle of TBL. However, more generally as it has applied to the adoption of sustainable practices by local government, Williams, Wilmshurst and Clift (2011:176) have argued that the subject has remained 'patchy' and as a topic for research has remained an area of enquiry in its infancy. Discussion has now considered the Precautionary Principle an alternative instrument capable of censuring the social and environmental excesses associated with tourism's unsustainable development.

3.4.2 Sustainable Tourism and the Precautionary Principle

Fennell and Ebert (2004) have noted that the concept of the Precautionary Principle (PP) had dated to the decade of the seventies in the last millennium and West Germany where it first emerged as a response to calls for an instrument capable of effectively corralling national environmental policy in pursuit of resource conservation (see also Dobson, 2000). Despite a measure of controversy surrounding the use of PP its value as an instrument of developmental constraint in an era of frequent change and uncertainty, has led to its widespread ratification and inclusion in the environmental policies of over forty nations (Fennell and Ebert, 2004). Jacobs (2013) has observed that PP has centred around regulatory mechanisms requiring that in the absence of established fact protection against damage that may be irreversible should warrant the exercise of sufficient caution. For associated reasons, as early as 1992 the Precautionary Principle had been incorporated into the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (UNCED, 1992) in which States were urged to include the principle where threats of serious or irreversible damage leading to environmental degradation could not be supported by scientific certainty.

Application of the Precautionary Principle in respect of damage occasioned by tourism activity has been well exemplified by growing concern regarding exponential increases in Antarctic tourism. In this regard Stewart, Draper and Johnston (2005) have argued that application of the Precautionary Principle should at the very least proceed until sufficient understanding of tourism's impacts can be determined. The evidence for tourism's contribution to climate change has continued to grow despite universal acknowledgement that the principles of sustainability should be integrated into national tourism policies (UNWTO, 2009). Concerns that this has not occurred has elevated the Precautionary Principle as the tool of choice for new tourism development particularly where little has been understood regarding the destination's developmental history (Bastmeijer and Roura, 2004). Earlier the approach had also been adopted by the Wilderness Society of Australia (1998) and since enshrining the principle in their Tourism and Natural Areas Policy document visitations to natural areas have not been allowed to compromise the environmental quality present and where that has raised doubts the Precautionary Principle has applied. The concept of the Precautionary Principle as a tool of mitigation intended to counter tourism's excesses has arguably been no less effective than that TBL and may indeed embellish

the functionality of the latter. However, the controversy surrounding many aspects associated with PP appear to have manifested due to confrontational aspects associated with its implementation and the direct challenge to pro-growth agendas pursued by the political economy of tourism (Fennell and Ebert, 2004).

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the nature and form of sustainable tourism. At its route, the concept was intended to counter the negative externalities known to impact both socially and environmentally on communities where the growth of tourism has been allowed to exceed a sustainable level. When tourism has been allowed to increase beyond the capacity of the finite socio-cultural and environmental resource base on which it has been dependent, at that point tourism would have contributed directly to the degradation of the destination. In this regard, it has been shown that tourism's externalities can assume various forms, but that all have the potential to threaten the wellbeing of the resident communities involved. The sustainable tourism debate and sustainable development as its conceptual genesis has been reviewed showing that the concept of sustainable tourism as the antidote for tourism's excessive development continues to be contested. While problems of definition have served to retard its application of greater concern has been that the essential concept that tourism be moderated has continued to conflict with the political economy of tourism which has sought to maximise growth. Notwithstanding this, particularly since 2006 the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2002; UNWTO/UNEP, 2009) had advocated the introduction of sustainable tourism at destination levels intended to mitigate the increasing incidence of social and environmental damage occasioned by tourism's developmental course.

In this regard, Triple Bottom Line reporting and the Precautionary Principle were discussed as instruments increasingly featured as suitable tools for achieving sustainable tourism. The second and more controversial Precautionary Principle has also been widely integrated into policies of international organisations as a remedial step where the environmental effects from rapid economic growth have warranted caution. This chapter has presented the argument that initiatives intended to mitigate tourism's destructive externalities continue to lack the necessary consistency required to counter the political and economic interests currently determining tourism's

growth. It has been argued that while this condition has persisted the concept of sustainable tourism has been kept in a state of near suspension as a policy issue by political agendas interested to resist initiatives that would actively counter the maximising of tourism's economic growth. But despite its contested suitability for the task the concept has at least been acknowledged as the tool of choice by national governments as signatories of the UNWTO accord. However, at the national level of government in Australia studies by Moyle, McLennan, Ruhanen and Weiler (2014) had found little advancement in receptivity towards the principle of sustainability and in 2015 Australia had withdrawn membership of the UNWTO. At the State Government level the situation has appeared marginally improved with reports from NSW and Victoria advocating use of the TBL to ensure that tourism's development proceeded sustainably. More generally and despite the social and environmental urgency associated with implementing sustainable practices, Williams (2012) had drawn attention to the near vacuum regarding research into responses to sustainability by the public sector and particularly local government. In this regard, the current study has sought to counter this shortfall by interrogating perspectives held among Tasmania's local councils and government. The research question has asked - *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* To address this the following chapter presents a qualitative interpretive methodology adopted in preparation for conducting the study.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

Chapter four discusses the research approach, methodology and methods adopted in preparation for addressing the research question – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* In answer, a qualitative interpretive methodology was applied to interrogate perspectives from among twenty-nine local governments and their council's regarding the principle of sustainability and its relationship to tourism using the State of Tasmania as context. A 2008 United Nations World Tourism Organisation initiative that had advocated the introduction of sustainable tourism at tourism destination levels was an attempt to pre-empt the potential for significant social and environmental damage acknowledged to occur in the wake of tourism's excesses. The central purpose of the current study therefore, has been to determine whether diffusion of the UNWTO edict had subsequently resulted in the integration of the principles of sustainability with local tourism policies at the municipal level of government as the organisations vested with responsibility for one or more of the state's numerous tourism destinations.

While literature regarding tourism and particularly that in respect of destination marketing and economic impacts were found to proliferate (Ruhanen, 2006; Beaumont and Dredge, 2010; DEDTA, 2010; TRA, 2011; Buckley, 2012; Ruhanen, 2013; TRA, 2013; TRA, 2014), a search identifying work detailing local governments and their council's responses to both tourism and sustainability have proved marginal (Dredge, Macbeth, Carson, Beaumont, Northcote and Richards, 2006). The current study therefore proceeded on the basis that little research existed concerning local perceptions regarding sustainability or the presence of tourism (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998). The study sought to determine whether diffusion of the concept of sustainable tourism in respect of UNWTO advocacy urging mitigation of tourism's negative externalities had subsequently been integrated among the state's local councils as an instrument for monitoring the social and environmental effects of tourism (UNEP, 1995; UNWTO, 2002; UNWTO, 2007; UNWTO, 2008;

UNWTO/UNEP, 2009). To this end engagement with local governments and their councils were sought with a view to interrogating those perceptions subsequently determining the rationality of local choices in response to tourism.

In respect of the study's theoretical dimensions the theory of rational choice (Scott, 2000) has been utilised as a lens to explore the political economy of tourism and its relationship to perspectives generated among local governments and their councils regarding tourism's economic relevance. In consideration of the pro-growth agendas dominating tourism policies at higher levels of government in Australia, the theory has also been applied more generally to explore the extent of those influences filtering down to municipal levels (Boudon, 2009). At the local level of government where tourism manifests in real as distinct from theoretical terms and has encompassed community and environment beyond solely economic considerations, perspectives determining rational choices regarding sustainability could not be assumed to accord with those of higher tiers of government.

The chapter commences with an overview of the research approach adopted for the study and includes both ontological and epistemological positions. Thereafter, the qualitative interpretive methodology used and the reasons for its selection are discussed. The qualitative methods selected are then considered followed by discussion of the two-part research design comprising phases one and two that deal with the collection and analysis of both secondary and primary data respectively. The chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter's content and a declaration of limitations and assumptions bearing on the sufficiency of the research.

4.1 Research Approach

This study was built on the contention that questions raised by the research design could not be adequately addressed by adopting a positivist approach premised on the assumption that empirical evidence confirming local reality would be independent of perceptions inherent in human agency. Such a position was considered counter to the ontological assumptions underpinning this study which assert that it is not possible to know the source of knowledge directly, because all knowledge needs necessarily to be interpreted through the filter of human experience. The adoption of this position for the current study has determined that all knowledge acquired would be the product of

specific meanings and that these would assume legitimacy as a socially constructed reality for those concerned (Sarantakos, 2001; Pernecky, 2010).

The choice of local government and their councils as a suitable choice for the study resulted due to their direct responsibility for visitor impacts on tourism destinations and in the context of Tasmania their relationship to that State's Tourism Commission. In this regard, the methodology employed provided the optimal instrument with which to achieve a sufficient depth of interrogation considered unobtainable by other means. The decision to utilise Tasmania as the context for the study stemmed from its status as Australia's sole island State. This circumstance has contributed to variations in its social, economic and cultural determinants relative to those of other Australian States. Tasmania's geographic isolation from mainland Australia by the Bass Strait has been an enduring factor in the evolution of the State's political and economic characteristics (BITRE, 2008). It is home to Australia's most decentralised population (DPAC, 2014) confirmed by disbursement of its twenty-nine municipalities. The discrete nature of the island's economic and demographic evolution (BITRE, 2008) and its greater reliance on tourism relative to other Australian States, has recommended it as ideally suited as the context for this study, an investigation into perspectives held by local governments and their councils regarding sustainability and its relationship to tourism.

4.1.1 Ontology

The ontological position adopted for this study has proceeded on the assumption that the nature of reality is reflexive and necessarily interpreted through the agency of human perception (Neuman, 2011; Platenkamp, 2013). This position has also determined that the subsequent research findings would be inherently subjective arguing for the contextual relevance of adopting nominalist ontology. Notwithstanding, within the ontological preserve of nominalism this study has assumed a more moderate perspective that in the context of human enquiry no single reality can exist independent of human subjectivity or what Patton (2002:134) has termed 'the inevitability of socially constructed multiple realities'.

4.1.2 Epistemology

Constructivism, the epistemological perspective adopted for this study, is concerned with the generation of knowledge through the interpretation of subjective realities (Jennings, 2006; Neuman, 2011; Babbie, 2013). The study's theoretical perspective has employed a constructivist narrative in which the spectrum of perspectives sought from twenty-nine local governments and their councils were assumed to be relativist. That is, the reality underpinning perspectives recorded were assumed to be socially constructed and therefore that no rational basis could exist for prioritising one perspective over another (Patton, 2002; Neuman, 2011; Pernecky, 2012). Constructivism alludes to the generation and transmission of meaning as a collective understanding particularly as exemplified by groups or cultures (Patton, 2002; Pernecky, 2012). This perspective legitimises the interpretation of comment by the local governments and councils on which this study was premised and more particularly the shared discourses that have predetermined local responses to sustainability and its relationship to tourism. The construction of this knowledge was also assumed to be a dynamic process involving social interactions and occurring in particular social settings thereafter elicited through application of the methods employed for the two phases of the study's research design.

4.2 Method

Qualitative research has provided the methodological foundation for the research. Wilhelm Dilthey (cited in Brown, 1976) had given structure to this approach to research in the interpretive social sciences with the introduction and development of *verstehen*, connoting the researcher's capacity for empathic understanding in which one mind fully engages with another. Particularly as it has applied to phase two of the research it is the principle of *verstehen* that has underpinned the tenor of all participant interviews. This holistic approach is reflective of the hermeneutic school which has emphasised the importance of encompassing the whole in which the individual's subjective experiences can be captured and is concerned with how people 'perceive, create, and interpret their world' (Cote, Salmela, Baria and Russell, 1993:127). Similarly, when applied to local government and their councils this heuristic process can be said to profit from application of non-judgemental observation as a precondition for adequately interpreting local perspectives constituting legitimate realities for those concerned. The approach was built on the

proposition that the twenty-nine local governments and their councils as the primary focus of the research were assumed to be both, ‘coherent organisations and multi-actor arenas’ (Olsson, 2009:130). The qualitative methodology employed to organise the current study arose from concern to interpret without presumption, socially constructed perspectives among local governments and their councils towards sustainability and its relationship to tourism (Neuman, 2011).

In respect of identifying a unit of analysis for the study, the research design determined each of the twenty-nine local councils to constitute a single unit. Throughout the study a direct link was maintained between the research question and research conclusions as the condition for the data collection process and its analysis (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998). In anticipation that the research question would benefit from further research specifics, two sub-questions were also developed.

1. *To what extent has sustainable tourism been incorporated into local council economic development strategies?*
2. *To what extent have the principles of sustainability been incorporated into the Tasmanian local government decision-making process in relation to tourism’s development?’*

4.4.1 Development of a Qualitative Method

To fulfill the research objective, the methods selected sought to achieve a depth of inquiry by applying a two-phase qualitative process. For this, phase one pursued the content analysis of local council strategic planning documents as secondary data (Appendix A). Phase two then sought to acquire primary data through thirty-eight participant interviews conducted with local government employees using the State of Tasmania as context. The four themes on which the research has been platformed were identified for being central to the study’s objectives and their development achieved focus for the enquiry. A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods is permissible, and in respect of the current study a quantitative method was employed initially to establish the word/syntactic phrase frequency count from which the four research themes were subsequently developed. The inherent value of the qualitative approach is that it has allowed for a depth and richness of information to be drawn

from the relatively small sampling base which has been limited to the number of local governments and their councils in the context of Tasmania.

4.3 Research Phase One: Content Analysis

For phase one of the research electronic copies of all twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents were sourced online from their respective municipalities for content analysis (Appendix A). By virtue of the Local Government Act of Tasmania 1993 all local councils have been required to submit for public comment and thereafter to publish an administrative plan covering a minimum of five years. The purpose of the document has been two-fold to ensure accountability on the part of those elected to office in accord with democratic principles and thereafter to furnish an administrative blueprint for strategic management over the document's life. The legislated focus required of the documents as reports published in the public interest has determined their genre as relatively neutral and divorced from commercial content. In respect of the primary aims of the current study these local government strategic planning documents offer a significant measure of uniformity in textural content that lend themselves as suitable for comparative analysis.

In a minority of instances where the currency of particular documents was in question direct contact with the municipality in question confirmed the availability of updates or amendments. In aggregate while each of the twenty-nine documents assembled for analysis were a requirement under State law they presented considerable variation in textural complexity, ranging from simple lists of administrative objectives to a suite of strategies spanning several chapters. While collectively these documents presented uniformity in reporting purpose the economic, social and environmental variations occurring across the total of municipalities has accounted for the spectrum of differences identified in their presentation.

The core benefit to the current study of conducting a content analysis of local council strategic planning documents has been that they reveal insights into the economic and social nature of the State's twenty-nine municipalities not easily obtained by other means. The uniformity of purpose throughout the twenty-nine publications assured by legislative Act are argued to be especially significant as a source of secondary data for

the purposes of this research. The advantage has been in ensuring a relatively stable and consistent representation of the wishes of the local councils represented.

While the nature of the strategic planning documents analysed have been essentially free of commercial contamination when contextualised as an amalgamation of social and economic choices it is argued that they have nevertheless reflected vested self-interest as representative of their elected authors. Rational Choice Theory (RCT) would propose that the decisions and choices expressed in all documents subjected to the content analysis for this study are bound to reflect inherently rational choices.

4.3.1 The Content Analysis Process

Content analysis is a research method involving the systematic analysis of verbal, visual or textual data that has increasingly been accepted as a legitimate approach for the management of secondary data (Neuman, 2011). Its correct application effects the reduction of phenomena into defined categories for improved interpretation. Harwood and Garry (2003:479) have noted ‘Typically, it is a technique that enables analysis of ‘open-ended’ data to be structured for the purposes of diagnosis’. Content analysis for phase one was applied to the documents in three stages with the first concerned to establish word/phrase frequency to determine degrees of importance conferred on specific issues in the text (Appendix B). This process identified the frequency of occurrence for four word/syntactic phrase groups throughout Tasmania’s twenty-nine local council planning documents (Teddlie and Yu, 2007) (Appendix A). Hardy and Beeton (2002:183) have observed of this quantitative process that it ‘assumes a relationship between the frequency to which an item is mentioned or referred to in literature and its significance’. The key word/syntactic phrases: Stakeholders (tourism), Tourism/Visitor, Sustainable/Sustainability and Community were subsequently adopted as the basis for four recurring themes suited to address the needs of the research question.

The near absence of earlier research regarding the relationship between tourism and sustainability among local government and their councils in the context of Tasmania suggested that the number of themes be confined to issues directly germane to the study as this would benefit refinement of results for the two-phase research design. Thus, the four themes beyond tourism and sustainability were limited to the inclusion

of those stakeholders acting to influence or direct that relationship both politically and commercially, but necessarily included the State's destination communities as stakeholders in tourism. It was anticipated that the comparative analysis of data resulting from the two phases of the research would enhance the rigor of the study's findings (White and Marsh, 2006; Neuman, 2011; Oleinik, 2011).

The establishment of the four themes were considered capable of furnishing the basis for the research and provided the platform for the document analysis for phase-one. The decision to equip each theme with indicators grew from the need to systematise research data retrieved from across twenty-nine councils and were patterned on an earlier instrument developed by Ruhanen (2008) (see following paragraph). This earlier instrument did not specify the need for a particular number of indicators but rather that they be fit for purpose. The decision to allocate eight indicators to each theme for the current study resulted from a wish to achieve uniformity in the volume of data collected. Eight, the number of indicators settled on, were deemed sufficient to extract the data sought and beyond which saturation would occur. Collectively the eight indicators for each theme have been designed to build insights into perspectives entertained by the councils concerned and reflected in their strategic planning documents. Although dependent on the textual content of these documents responses to all thirty-two indicators succeeded in building specific insights into the attitudes and predispositions within the council involved. Given the economic, socio-cultural and geographical diversity defining Tasmania's shires use of the indicators under the four related themes were found to deliver a detail of data otherwise not readily available. Application of the themes and indicators for the current study took the form of the Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI).

4.3.2 The Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI)

The Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI) was designed to extract detail as textual content from twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents (Appendix F). The documents concerned were inherently local in content and reflective of local perspectives. The TASEI was patterned on an earlier instrument originally developed by Simpson (2001) the *Tourism Planning Process Evaluation Instrument* an exploratory tool based on theoretical constructs that had proposed a planning process for measuring the conformity of desirable principles for

long-term sustainable tourism among communities. Simpson's original instrument had included fifty-one indicators under five themes; Stakeholder participation, Vision and Values, Situation Analysis, Goals and Objectives and Implementation and Review. The instrument was used in the analysis of tourism planning documents collected in regional New Zealand.

The instrument developed by Simpson was subsequently adapted by Ruhanen (2008) for application in a Queensland rural setting to identify municipal responses to sustainable tourism initiatives. The study focused on the issue of knowledge management and sought to establish that the available body of knowledge on sustainability was not sufficiently diffused at the destination level to be of use as a basis for tourism planning. Ruhanen's version of the tool was employed to establish criteria across five sections: Physical, Environmental and Economic Situation Analysis, Indicators of Destination Planning, Stakeholder Participation, Vision and Values and the Tourism Planning Approach. Design of the Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI) employed for the current study while not concerned with the specifics of tourism planning has been modeled on a simplified version of Ruhanen's model. The resulting Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI) was structured around four research themes: Stakeholder influence, Tourism, Sustainability and Community, each equipped with eight indicators. Development of the four themes and thirty-two indicators were intentionally limited in scope and specific to tourism, its stakeholders, its sustainability and community responses as presented in the twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents analysed. The final and third stage in the content analysis was concerned to measure collectively each of the thirty-two indicators.

4.3.3 Applying Qualitative Methods in Content Analysis

Particularly in respect of qualitative studies content analysis is a systematic methodical approach applied to documents obtained for the purposes of research (White and Marsh, 2006). In respect of the current study a qualitative approach to content analysis had allowed for broad-based definitions and therefore the construction of a model that 'describes the phenomenon in conceptual terms' (Elo and Kyngas, 2008:107). With the exception of the process employed to determine word frequencies for the initial stage this objective had predetermined the current study as

unsuited to a quantitative approach and assumptions that empirical data could be tested against an existing theoretical position. The approach adopted for the content analysis was therefore, inductive with the objective of constructing rather than testing existing knowledge. By engaging with the material inductively it became possible to identify the presence of shared perspectives and ascribed meanings among the twenty-nine council documents interrogated for which a search of the literature had revealed no prior data was available.

The content analysis approached as a qualitative research exercise was concerned with synthesising data into primary, secondary and latent meanings (Neuman, 2011). Its application achieved the reduction of phenomena into defined categories where results then provided for improved interpretation (Harwood and Garry, 2003; Elo and Kyngas, 2008). Semiotics the stronghold of qualitative content analysis (Babbie, 2013) sought to extract and categorise such meanings as perspectives, but these were often only indirectly available as phenomena experienced and therefore, relied on interpretation rather than direct experience as an empirical reality (Oleinik, 2011; Babbie, 2013). For this reason, use of the term 'perspective' as distinct from 'perception' was deemed superior as a platform on which to discern underlying truths. Such subjectivity inherent in the qualitative content analytical process raised the prospect of researcher bias at virtually all stages of the analysis an issue ameliorated by the use of sound operational definitions (Krippendorff, 2004). For the conceptual content analysis under discussion initial units of analysis were established by applying a word/syntactic phrase frequency count (Appendix B) to the twenty-nine local council planning documents involved. The guiding criteria for use of the cross-sectional approach to research was that the examination of information covering several sources should occur at a single point in time (Neuman, 2011). For the current study therefore, the cross-section for all documents analysed was set at March 2013 and resulted in 96.5% of local strategic planning documents being available for analysis (Appendix A).

4.3.4 The Development of Conceptual Themes

The intention when completing the word/syntactic frequency count was not to benchmark against predetermined criteria, but to identify the frequency of occurrence in texts for the selected words and phrases to determine their commonality regardless

of the evident differences in size of the twenty-nine documents. In this regard, classical content analysis was applied uniformly identifying and marking for frequency of occurrence of words and syntactic phrases. Subsequently Key Word In Context was applied during successive stages to identify the context in which words/phrases were employed and their contextual links (Baskarada, 2014).

Table 4.0: Themes Resulting from Word/Syntactic Frequency Counts

A	Stakeholders (Tourism)
B	Tourist/Visitor
C	Sustainable/Sustainability
D	Community

Applying analytical rules of inference the relevance of the textural content was then considered in relation to the research question. Subsequently the result served in establishing the four conceptual themes used for the study (Table 4.0). Using analytical constructs to identify the concepts and patterns among the twenty-nine nominated documents, eight indicators were then developed for each of the four themes. The discussion that follows considers on each of the four themes and their attendant indicators.

4.3.5 Theme A: Stakeholders (Tourism)

The first theme Stakeholders (Tourism) (Table 4.1) sought to identify local perspectives regarding the primary influences impacting on tourism at the destination level. The primary stakeholder group was the destination's community, but other influences also included State and National Governments, corporate and business interests and regional and local tourism bodies. For each municipality, such sources of influence and their impact on the form and progress of tourism varied and manifested either singularly or as multiple inputs. For example, Public Private Partnerships as a potential source of influence on tourism's local development may have involved one individual or a corporation and were in several cases indicative of the increasing trend to governance arrangements by local but also State governments in pursuit of increased economic efficiencies.

Table 4.1: TASEI – Theme A Stakeholders (Tourism)

01	Local visitor opinion influenced tourism's development
02	Local community consultation influenced the tourism development process
03	The document identifies Local Tourism Authority (LTA) participation
04	The document identifies consultation with local tourism business operatives
05	The document identifies State government influence on local tourism development
06	Contracted specialists contributed to the tourism development process
07	The relevant Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) influenced the development process
08	The document indicates the presence of Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements

Tourism as an essentially commercial function was particularly amenable to such arrangements (Geddes, 2006; Jeffery, 2009; Bailey and Richardson, 2010; Beaumont and Dredge, 2010; Bramwell, 2011). The importance for the current study of clarifying such influences was rooted in the threat to the integrity of Tasmanian communities and their sense-of-place where developmental excesses are frequently the result of commercial agendas. The issue has been global in dimension but the nature of the problem makes it equally applicable to local destinations. It bespeaks the primacy of the neoliberal orthodoxy directing the growth of tourism for economic ends and has shown a tendency to marginalise regard for the social and environmental consequences of tourism's development. As the political economy of tourism the persistence demonstrated by this issue has proved instrumental in providing the impetus for UNWTO advocacy regarding the introduction of sustainable tourism in destinations and has been central to this study.

4.3.6 Theme B: Tourism/Visitors

The second theme Tourism/Visitors (Table 4.2) sought to quantify the importance accorded tourism among the State's municipalities and to identify perspectives held by local councils regarding its presence. In pursuit of this the theme's eight indicators sought to situate the economic, social and environmental considerations attending tourism's development. The importance accorded tourism's contribution to the State's economy had suggested that similar motivations could also apply to its numerous

communities, but conversely might also have manifested as issues altogether unrelated to economic focus. This accorded with the socially divisive nature of tourism's excesses in cases where development had proceeded without regard for its sustainability. It has been an issue at the core of UNWTO advocacy regarding the introduction of sustainable tourism with Tasmania's resident communities implicated as tourism destinations. The relevance of Theme B to the current study was therefore, in providing increased clarity regarding perspectives towards the presence of tourism and visitors among Tasmania's communities.

4.2: TASEI - Theme B Tourism/Visitors

09	The document articulates a strategy for tourism's economic development
10	The document articulates a strategy for tourism's sustainable development
11	The document declares a community preference for tourism's development
12	The document identifies the destination's physical resources as economic assets
13	The document identifies the employment value of tourism development
14	The document identifies visitor numbers, spend and duration of stay
15	The document articulates tourism's local development in marketing and promotional terms
16	A stand-alone document details a plan or strategy for local tourism

4.3.7 Theme C: Sustainable/Sustainability

The third theme Sustainable/Sustainability (Table 4.3) sought to identify local council perspectives regarding the issue of sustainability and whether these had extended to inclusion in planning schema for tourism. The theme also sought more generally to assess awareness regarding the principle of sustainability as a developmental precept its primary applications and evidence of knowledge regarding monitoring and reporting instruments such as TBL (ACT, 2011; Slaper and Hall, 2011). The importance of Theme C in addressing the research question has been in the necessity of establishing that applications of sustainability at the local level have at the very least reflected regard for the social and environmental issues manifesting globally. Currently little is understood regarding the extent to which sustainability has been understood or integrated into planning schema by local councils in Tasmania and more particularly whether these have proceeded in consideration of tourism volume.

The pristine environmental quality characterising Tasmania’s topography and on which the continuance of tourism is premised has argued for initiatives directed at its sustainable management able to ensure its long-term integrity.

Table 4.3: TASEI - Theme C Sustainable/Sustainability

17	The document reflects an awareness of the concept of sustainability
18	The document identifies sustainability as a precept for development
19	The document identifies the value of reporting for sustainability
20	The document includes goals related to environmental protection
21	The document identifies goals related to social cohesion and wellbeing
22	The document acknowledges and quantifies tourism’s environmental impact
23	The document identifies a preference for tourism development that is sustainable
24	The document identifies a strategy for implementing sustainable tourism principles

4.3.8 Theme D: Community

Theme D Community (Table 4.4), sought to identify perspectives regarding council/community relationships. The relevance to the study regarding the nature of such interactions has stemmed from the sociology of the island’s communities. This has identified resident communities as attaching significant importance to their sense-of-place (Stratford, 2008; Tasmanian Government, 2013). While tourism has been acknowledged for providing economic benefits for the majority of those communities this has arguably been at cost to their commodification as tourism product. The compromise suggested by the interplay of these dynamics has recommended an improved understanding regarding the degree to which economic benefits are welcomed before the community’s sense-of-place is irretrievably damaged by tourism’s excesses. The theme’s eight indicators applied to each of the council documents analysed sought to quantify awareness levels on this issue and whether the increasing presence of tourism had given rise to the potential for conflict due to these factors.

Table 4.4: TASEI - Theme D Community

25	The document identifies whole-of-community values
26	The document assesses the destination's overall quality of life
27	The document identifies issues critical to resident's interests
28	The document identifies demographics and population levels
29	The document identifies major local economic activities
30	The document draws attention to the locality's principal attractions
31	The document identifies the primary characteristics of the local climate
32	The document identifies awareness regarding climate change

4.3.9 Assigning Values to Content Analysis Data

The results from application of the thirty-two TASEI indicators to local council strategic planning documents were each assigned a value of either 'Evident', 'Tenuous' or 'Absent' to determine their relative values in the survey. To translate these into a numerical equivalent a purpose designed assessment tool developed by Zhang, Ruhanen, Murphy and Cooper (2004) was applied. The tool provided for the conversion of values resulting from application of a Likert scale. Thus, conversion of a value into its numerical equivalent resulted in a count of two for 'Evident', one for 'Tenuous' and zero for 'Absent'. The decision to include the intermediate value 'Tenuous' stemmed from concern to accommodate and thereafter capture instances where particular indicators had recorded only rudimentary evidence for the presence of a topic. It was determined that the discounting of these values as insufficiently representative would result in an unnecessarily polarised interpretation of the data. When the tool was applied the highest numerical value doubled. Thus, in the event all values for any specific theme were 'Evident' the eight indicators would deliver a maximum of sixteen, conversely a count of eight 'Absent' results would produce an absolute minimum and zero. Using this model values for each of the four TASEI themes had been applied to each of the twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents. The resulting values have also been included as tables accompanying discussion and analysis of each municipality (Chapter 5) a table provided as an appendix has also presented an aggregated result of all values (Appendix C).

4.3.10 Analysis

Qualitative data analysis has first involved reading through or beyond the material to ensure sound familiarity a process that benefiting from application of an analytic imagination during interpretation (James, 2012). The ideographic themes identified and developed early in phase one of the research design subsequently provided the framework for the qualitative analysis that followed. Thereafter, the objective has been to generate inference via the sequential analysis of data and this permitting the development of theory. This process consisted of ‘examining, categorising, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining evidence to draw empirically based conclusions’ (Yin, 2009:126). With respect to phase one a hermeneutic interpretation based on semiotics was applied and considered preferable given the presence of representations, local perspectives and intended meanings identified as common threads throughout the texts analysed. In this, analysis was concerned with the interpretation of locally constructed meanings thereafter textually communicated as a legitimate reality (Beynon-Davies, 2009).

4.4 Summary of Phase One of the Research

Phase one applied an interpretive method to the content analysis of twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents contextualised to the State of Tasmania. The content of these documents was deemed to be representative of locally generated perspectives by the councils concerned. Employing analytical constructs, inferences drawn from both text and syntax were contextually aligned with the research question. The four primary themes that resulted were subsequently developed into the Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI) an analytical tool comprised of thirty-two indicators (Appendix F). The TASEI was applied to the documents in the second stage of the analysis with the objective of identifying the relative prominence of socially constructed meanings as perspectives among Tasmania’s local councils regarding stakeholders, tourism, sustainability and community. The third stage was concerned to apply each of the thirty-two indicators to the municipal documents as a collective permitting identification of a commonality of perspectives and meanings among the municipalities concerned. With respect to the forgoing procedures caution was observed regarding the inherent limitations of content analysis noting that while it had served as an aid in identifying the results from the themes developed this did not extend to attributing cause (Wilson, 2011). Mindful of this caveat a qualitative

interpretive method employed during phase two was intended to instill added rigor to the study by further progressing the themes employed during the content analysis for phase one.

4.5 Research Phase Two: Applying Qualitative Methods in Participant Interviews

Phase two of the research design utilised a qualitative interpretive method to conduct a series of interviews with local government employees selected from twenty-nine municipalities using Tasmania as the context. The preference for the qualitative approach for interviews stemmed from consideration of the depth and richness of the resulting data as the most important factor in the research process. The iterative perspective informing the approach to interviews has been recommended by Yin (1994:9) ‘A how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control’. The decision to conduct personal interviews grew from similar convictions of gathering at source the perspectives of those local government employees with direct responsibility for decisions encompassing the issues of both tourism and sustainability central to the current study. The overarching objective when conducting interviews was to achieve empathic engagement with participants calculated to develop trust and candour in responses. This method is suited where a deeper and more detailed form of investigation is sought. This, the foundation on which interviews were conducted helped to ensure freedom in the way each respondent was allowed to uncover their narrative (Knox and Burkard, 2009).

4.5.1 Overview of the Approach Informing Phase Two

Due to the inherently subjective nature of qualitative methods (Veal, 2006; Neuman, 2011; Babbie, 2013), it was considered that data derived from the content analysis for phase one would benefit from added rigor. On this Jennings (2001:151) has noted ‘no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors’ and that alternative methods ‘reveal different aspects of empirical reality’. Phase two therefore, was concerned to gather primary data intended to expand on the findings from phase one. In pursuit of this two employees from each of Tasmania’s twenty-nine municipalities were invited to participate in interviews. Of these a participation rate of approximately sixty-five percent was achieved totaling thirty-eight respondents

from Tasmania's local government management tier.

On completion, the schedule of interviews revealed insights considered both expansive and lucid in respect of answers sought for addressing the research question. The material gathered from interviews indicated a significant degree of candour on the part of participants resulting in identification of specific categories of local perspectives believed to be unavailable by other means. These concerned tourism, the nature and form of tourism's stakeholders, the issue of sustainability and its relationship to the State's destination communities.

Phase two was concerned with an analysis of primary data regarding perspectives recorded during interviews with selected management personnel from Tasmania's local government tier. At the point of interview each participant was assured anonymity and in that regard transcriptions resulting from interviews were stored under security arrangements with the University of Tasmania. All comment volunteered by respondents were allotted a participant code (i.e. NM1/A). Data resulting from interviews was the subject of an initial coding process based on the research themes.

Regardless of the procedure followed during data collection it was not possible for the researcher to avoid some interpretation of the narrative (Whiffin, Bailey, Ellis-Hill and Jarrett, 2014). In respect of the current study and mindful of the limited capacity to check the potential for such influence, transcriptions of the recorded interviews employed a denaturalised transcription method where data was 'laundered' to remove content such as cadence, intonation and laughter (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). The decision to denaturalise transcriptions stemmed from concern regarding the time available and therefore the lack of opportunity to engage with respondents outside the confines of the interview session. The limitations imposed by this aspect were further constrained by the necessity of working within time frames determined by municipalities regarding the availability of employees (Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998).

Raw material resulting from the thirty-eight interviews with local government employees were subsequently categorised according to the four themes employed for phase one. Collectively these resulted in sixteen 'topics' for analysis. Thus,

participant responses to Theme A (Stakeholder Influence) resulted in the identification of six topics. Theme B (Perspectives regarding Tourism) resulted in three topics. Theme C (Perspectives regarding Sustainability) resulted in four topics and Theme D (Community) resulted in three topics. In aggregate, these constituted the full spectrum of participant perspectives recorded and the data subsequently subjected to analysis in fulfillment for phase two of the study.

4.5.2 Comment Regarding Questions Used in Interviews

Seven open-ended questions (Appendix G) were formulated to direct the attention of participants to particular aspects related to the purpose of the interview, but these were not in all cases applied. Prior to interview sessions each participant was briefed regarding the range of topics to be covered. The seven questions were structured to cover that range and dealt with particular aspects considered sufficiently important for inclusion in the study. In this regard questions were reserved for use during interviews where the conversational direction suggested the need to refocus. For example, the majority of respondents offered significant detail regarding issues covered by the first four questions which obviated the need for their introduction. Therefore, where questions were asked these were conversational prompts and often paraphrased where it had become clear that a specific issue would benefit from elaboration. In the event one of the seven questions were asked, respondents were encouraged to interpret it as a starting point from which to elaborate. This tact was adopted to reduce to an absolute minimum the formality generally surrounding the use of questions in interview sessions. To this end their primary function as open-ended questions was to broaden avenues for the continuance of dialogue with participants where this was considered to advantage outcomes. In several instances, their use was pre-empted by the direction taken in conversation. Insights offered by Veal (2006:251) have confirmed the tenor adopted, 'The interviewer asks a question without any prompting of the range of answer to be expected, and writes down the respondent's reply verbatim'. The use of questions in research, proceed on the basis of one of two available options, open-ended or closed-ended with in-depth qualitative interviewing the exclusive preserve for the open-ended question (Babbie, 2013). Commenting on the use of the open-ended question Sarantakos (2001:231) has usefully provided specifics regarding their value, 'they allow freedom to express feelings and thoughts especially when complex issues are being studied. They offer information in areas

that might not have been foreseen by the researcher’.

4.5.3 Preparation

Prior to commencing phase two it was considered necessary to become thoroughly conversant with the study environment the primary concepts involved and the relevant methods to be used (Yin, 2009; Baskarada, 2014). In this regard preparation for the study was preceded by a familiarisation phase in respect of Tasmania’s tourism industry its structure and identification of suitably informed industry sources.

4.5.4 Participant Recruitment

The process employed to determine the suitability of participants for interviews commenced with an initial pre-selection based on information canvassed through the administration department of each of Tasmania’s twenty-nine municipalities. The criteria sought well-informed management personnel, either those employees holding responsibility for specific portfolios considered germane to the study or more senior management capable of providing the necessary overview of local government perceptions regarding stakeholders, tourism, sustainability and community. In this regard due to variations apparent in size of the twenty-nine municipalities it was not possible in all cases to achieve a uniformity of responses. For example, as it applied to Tasmania’s smaller local governments some discrete portfolios such as sustainability were not always available and where this was so, it was usually the case that portfolios had been merged or placed under the direction of the general manager.

Recruitment of suitable local government employees for phase two of the research proceeded following identification of specific personnel located within the municipalities concerned. These were subsequently qualified as suitably informed sources in respect of their community its economic status, sustainable practices, tourism and stakeholders having vested interests in tourism. The personnel selected were invited to participate in discrete one-on-one interviews. Initial contact with municipal authorities was directed to the general manager with thirteen subsequently agreeing to participate. In the majority of cases local government employees selected ranged from directors through to field officers with responsibility for specific portfolios (Table 4.5). The final selection of participants, were drawn from the ranks of management teams as well-informed sources regarding issues germane to the study

(Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). In respect of recruitment due care was taken recognising the importance of the process as the pre-determinant determining the credibility of results when considered against the research question (White, Oelke and Friesen, 2012). The decision to focus on local government employees as distinct from elected officials was intended to minimise the potential for data contamination given the contribution by council documents for phase one. Moreover, as the majority of interview participants tended to be long-serving local government employees their practical knowledge regarding the administrative dynamics of their respective shires was considered of greater benefit to the study.

Table 4.5 Local Government Participant Interview Categories

Acting General Manager	4
Councillor	1
Deputy General Manager	4
Director, Economic Development	2
Director, Corporate and Community	1
Executive Manager	1
General Manager	9
Manager, Community Services	1
Manager, Corporate Services	1
Manager, Economic Development	6
Manager, Marketing	2
Regional Development Officer	1
Tourism Officer	5
Total	38

4.5.5 Pilot Interviews

The purpose of pilot interviews was designed to test and refine both the relevance and functionality of the intended approach to interviewing and included trial of open-ended questions developed for later use in interviews. During the pilot process the potential for researcher bias and the attendant risks of skewed interview proceedings were monitored as issues at the forefront of the researcher's concerns (Chenail, 2011; Baskarada, 2014). Five respondents participated in the pilot interviews drawn from

the northern Tasmanian municipalities of Burnie and Central Coast. An assessment following completion of the pilot interviews concluded that the number of questions be increased from six to seven. This provided for the addition of a question regarding Triple Bottom Line reporting an issue considered key in determining awareness levels regarding sustainable practices at local government and local council levels in Tasmania.

4.5.6 Structuring of Participant Interviews

The qualitative interpretive methodology employed for the current study adopted an empathic approach during interview sessions. Engagement with participants proceeded based on an interview style couched in the romanticist view in which the research interview was first and foremost a human encounter in which participants were encouraged to reveal authentic experiences (Qu and Dumay, 2011). The approach was conducive for the extraction of insights into participant's subjective perspectives through the fostering of mutual interviewer/interviewee collaboration towards the research's objectives (Roulston, 2010). In pursuit of this the interviewer was concerned with being attentive to participants as individuals first seeking to establish trust, rapport and commitment with the interviewee an approach reflective of Weber's *verstehen* or empathic listening (Jennings, 2006). To achieve this, interviews were characterised by the observing of suitable protocols and the establishment of interview etiquette, high levels of cooperation and informality. In the majority of cases positive interviewer/interviewee relationships were established at an early juncture resulting in a significant level of shared confidences and candour. The setting chosen for interviews was in all cases the participant's principal working environment and this calculated to ensure the respondent's confidence. The duration of interviews which by agreement were recorded for later transcription ranged from forty minutes to in excess of one hour (Mero-Jaffe, 2011).

With respect to interviews undertaken for phase two the role of researcher and interviewer were synonymous. At the very minimum, this required adequate attention given to preparation ensuring refinement of conversational strategies during contact. Moreover, acknowledgement that the stages of rapport built between interviewer and interviewee would need to progress through apprehension to exploration and cooperation before participation (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006).

4.5.7 Coding

The interview material coded in phase two of the research consisted of a quantity of qualitative data resulting from thirty-eight in-depth interviews. The challenge therefore, using thematic analysis was to organise and interpret this material grouping it into conceptual categories and sub-themes (Aronson, 1995). Initially coding of data gathered from the qualitative interview process commenced with abstractions, concepts, generalisations and the pursuit of ideas.

Table 4.6 Themes and Coding Rules for Research Phase 1

<i>Original Node</i>	<i>Coding Rules</i>
Stakeholders	Tourism's local development is influenced by visitor opinion Community consultation influences the tourism development process The document identifies Local Tourism Authority (LTA) participation Consultation with tourism business operatives is identified State Govt influence on local tourism is identified Contracted specialists contribute to the tourism development process The Regional Tourism Organisation influences the development process Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements are identified
Tourism	A strategy for tourism's economic development is articulated A strategy for tourism's sustainable development is articulated The document declares a preference for tourism's development The destination's physical resources are identified as economic assets The document identifies the employment value of tourism's development The document identifies visitor numbers, spend and duration of stay Tourism's local development is articulated in marketing terms A stand-alone document details a plan or strategy for local tourism
Sustainability	The document reflects an awareness of the concept of sustainability Sustainability as a precept for development is identified The value of reporting for sustainability is identified Goals related to environmental protection are included Goals related to social cohesion and wellbeing are included Tourism's environmental impact is acknowledged and quantified The document identifies a preference for sustainable tourism development A strategy for implementing sustainable tourism principles is identified
Community	Whole-of-community values are identified The destination's overall quality of life is identified Issues critical to resident's interests are identified Demographics and population levels are identified Major local economic activities are identified The document draws attention to the locality's principal attractions The document identifies the primary characteristics of the local climate The document identifies awareness regarding climate change

Initially the material was subjected to open coding that assigned data to one of four conceptual themes. These themes intentionally mirrored the original nodes and coding rules constituting the Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI)

applied to the content analysis of local council strategic planning documents in phase one of the research namely: stakeholders, tourism, sustainability and community (Table 4.6)

Initially the open coding process commenced by relating meanings sourced from interview transcripts. Neuman (2011) (see also Babbie, 2013) has recommended this approach as a sound method for establishing categories from a mass of data where the initial strategy has been to bring order to raw data, to locate nodes and to assign codes. As this process progressed nodes were identified, that is themes bound by similar or related categories of meaning. As these conceptual categories emerged they were allotted codes. Subsequently this process was subjected to axial coding in which the identified codes were organised through a more intensive analysis into a conceptual and structural order (Sarantakos, 1998).

Table 4.7 Themes and Coding Rules for Research Phase 2

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Coding Rules</i>
Stakeholders	Dialogue with National Government regarding tourism Dialogue with State Government regarding tourism Issues arising from State Government influence on tourism's local development Issues regarding leadership in Tasmania's tourism sector Issues concerning communication in tourism Partnership arrangements as a developmental contribution to local tourism
Tourism	Local Tourism as an Economic Consideration Issues of limited financial resources for tourism Environmental Issues Resulting from Tourism
Sustainability	Local Awareness of Sustainability Local Administrative Issues Impacting on Sustainability Sustainability as a Factor in Tourism's Local Development General Awareness Levels of TBL
Community	Community perspectives regarding tourism The social context of tourism Community perspectives regarding the economic value of tourism

Selective coding was applied to further organise the emergent themes and codes for critical review and examination a process that resulted in the production of Table 4.7. On this final stage Babbie (2013) has advised that selective coding is a favoured technique for its use in organising identified themes. Neuman (2011) has also

recommended this final process where concepts are to be established and core themes identified. Managing the research data in this way also benefited from synthesis in which the risk of expedience resulting from reductionist interpretations was avoided. The themes resulting from participant perspectives for phase two were intentionally aligned with those governing phase one.

4.5.8 Analysis of Participant Interview Data

Data assembled and subsequently transcribed from participant interviews for phase two presented a large and diverse narrative database (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). The analysis of this qualitative data required it to be read and re-read prior to interpretation thus ensuring sound familiarity with the material (Mason, 2002). This process was further assisted by the researcher's participation at all interviews. The result also benefited from earlier identification of textual patterns of meaningful text segments a process advantaged by application of analytic imagination when interpreting data (James, 2012). Data resulting from phase two employed a qualitative constant-comparative method of analysis. This method allowed for the identification of types, classes and patterns and for subsequent comparisons to be made inductively regarding the relationships between differing participant perspectives (Baskarada, 2009). This inductive process also provided for the development of theory grounded in interpretations of the resulting data categories and attendant inferences while maintaining a central relevance to the research question.

4.5.9 Ethical Considerations

The Human Research Ethics Committee Network University of Tasmania have issued precise guidelines regarding the granting of approvals prior to commencing research. The research under discussion required approval as a minimal risk category and this was determined by the stated intention to conduct participant interviews for phase two of the research. The committee has issued concise guidelines regarding procedures and these were designed to ensure the protection of participant identity, of obtaining informed consent and of ensuring secure management in respect of data storage. To comply with the tenets of the university's ethics committee each interview participant was issued detailed information at the initial point of contact. This information advised of their right to informed consent, the purpose of the research and that participation was voluntary.

At the point of introduction each participant was provided with an information sheet (Appendix H). This two page explanatory document furnished detail of the research project and the researcher's contact detail. Prior permission was sought regarding the use of recording equipment during interviews for the purposes of later transcriptions. Prior to each interview consent forms were also made available and participants were advised that they could terminate the interview at any stage without justifying their decision. In respect of meeting the ethical standards set the absence of controversial elements associated either directly or indirectly with the study the forgoing measures were deemed sufficient for the purposes for which they were intended.

4.6 Summary of Phase Two of the Research

Discussion has dealt with the collection and analysis of data extracted during participant interviews for phase two of the research. Preparatory stages identified the participant recruitment process, sufficiency of the interview process and compliance with prior stipulations regarding ethics. Particularly with respect to the latter this included an explanation regarding the implementation of measures sufficient to ensure the security and anonymity of respondents. Pilot interviews served to further refine the preparation of questions for subsequent use in interviews. The qualitative interpretive method selected for interviews ensured participant contributions were reflective of perspectives constituting a legitimate reality. The categorising and subsequent coding of data resulting from interviews was aligned with four research themes developed for phase one. The coding of data for these themes achieved sixteen topics from which data analysis could proceed.

4.7 Methodological Limitations and Assumptions

The study was limited by contextual factors of time and location in which both phases one and two of the research were reliant on circumstances present at the point of a cross-sectional sampling. It was also acknowledged that regardless of concern to limit subjective elements associated with the qualitative methods employed for the study by applying the Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument during phase one the possibility of researcher bias in the interpretation of data could not be entirely eliminated (Neuman, 2011; Baskarada, 2014). Further, the interviewing process for phase two necessarily engaged with participants whose behavioural dispositions may have reflected influences altogether unrelated to the purpose intended for the

interview. While the potential for such influences were assumed to exist among those participants interviewed they fell beyond the remit of this study.

Research for this study had proceeded on the basis of particular assumptions. It was assumed that in aggregate the strategic planning documents subjected to analysis for phase one provided a relatively balanced summary of primary perspectives among local councils in Tasmania. This assumption was based on the belief that all local councils concerned could demonstrate a uniformity of purpose in general accord with State Government legislative requirements. It was also assumed that the same municipal documents as reliable sources of data would reflect the aspirations of their respective electorates. Accordingly, this would provide an indication regarding the status of tourism and of sustainable practices existing among Tasmania's municipalities.

The research utilised qualitative interpretive methods to interrogate employees from twenty-nine local governments to determine whether the management of local tourism proceeded in consideration of ensuring sustainable outcomes in accord with UNWTO advocacy. In pursuit of this the study was delimited to the Australian State of Tasmania and the benefits accruing to the study from the researcher's familiarity with that State (Baskarada, 2014). However, it should be noted that the limitations inherent in research contextualised to the State in question may not be necessarily amenable to generalisation (Veal, 2006).

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the philosophical and methodological foundations deemed necessary for addressing the research question – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* Discussion commenced with an overview of the research approach determined as most suited for the study due to the benefits considered obtainable from a focused and in-depth inquiry. Constructivism, a qualitative methodology and its attendant ontological and epistemological perspectives, were also discussed as a philosophical framework. An inductive approach compatible with the interpretive social sciences was identified as most suited to the research objective which sought to record local council and local

government perspectives regarding tourism and sustainability contextualised to the State of Tasmania.

A qualitative interpretive method in the form of a two-phase research design was discussed. In this, phase one of the research design the three stages of a content analysis were discussed and focusing on twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents. Themes identified during the first stage subsequently contributed to the development of the Tourism and Sustainable Evaluation Instrument (TASEI), an analytical tool then employed during the remaining stages two and three of the content analysis. Results from these stages were then assigned values for the purpose of identifying the relative prominence of perspectives among Tasmania's municipalities as responses to four conceptual themes developed for that purpose.

Discussion then engaged with the qualitative interpretive method utilised for phase two of the research and a series of thirty-eight interviews conducted with local government employees. Noted was the importance accorded to preparations prior to conducting these interviews and of the necessity for ethical compliance. The procedure followed for participant recruitment was discussed together with the format selected for the interviews as best suited for assembling new knowledge of respondent perspectives. Data resulting from interviews was coded to reflect conceptual themes before being further segregated into categories. This process resulted in sixteen topics for textual analysis. Finally, methodological limitations and assumptions regarded as encroaching on the research process were identified and declared.

Chapter Five

Analysis of Tasmanian Local Government Strategic Planning Documents

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents phase one of the research design in which Tasmania's twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents were subjected to a qualitative content analysis in part answer of the research question – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* The first phase extracted data from secondary document sources in order to identify perspectives among local councils regarding tourism and sustainable practices. Of note the Tasmanian Local Government Act makes no provision for tourism as a topic for inclusion in municipal strategic planning. However, the near universal perception of tourism as a potential source of economic growth has found virtually all municipalities providing for its inclusion in their strategic planning documents as a key consideration of future projections for local prosperity.

The chapter has commenced with a brief description of the form and purpose of local council strategic planning documents. Data was drawn from each document using the Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI) (Appendix F), the analytical instrument developed for that purpose. To draw out issues germane to the study, perspectives collected from the documents were categorised into four themes; Stakeholders, Tourism, Sustainability and Community. The resulting data with commentary was then presented together with a brief overview of each of Tasmania's twenty-nine municipalities. This was followed by further analysis in which the collective results for the instrument's thirty-two indicators were revisited with commentary. The chapter has concluded with a summary and explanations for the data presented.

5.1 Audit of Tasmanian Local Council Strategic Planning Documents

Tasmania's twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents have provided a relatively objective portal through which to assess municipal deliberations regarding issues germane to the study (Appendix A). The production of these documents has

complied with a requirement under the provisions of the *Tasmanian Local Government Act, 1993* (Government of Tasmania, 2014). The Act has mandated that the State's twenty-nine municipalities prepare a strategic plan with a minimum operational life of five years. While this minimum term is a requirement of the Act no stipulation has been made regarding a uniform commencement date for publication of the documents. Thus, significant variation can be detected in the operating dates for each of the documents. In consideration of this and for the purposes of this study the benchmark of March 2013 was struck and strategic plans current at that time then constituted the cross-sectional study. In the three instances where the expiry term of particular documents predated the benchmark date it was the case that an already revised version of that municipality's strategic plan had yet to be made publicly available.

The primary purpose within the meaning of the *Tasmanian Local Government Act* (1993) has ensured accountability among elected councils with respect to pre-election agendas communicated to voting electorates. The legislated rulings under the Act, that have provided for publication of local council strategic plans were intended to be reflective of the common good. Councillors were expected to consult with their electorate and with the municipality's permanent management in the drawing up of a strategic plan thereafter made available for public comment. Subsequent to community feedback the plan was submitted to council for adoption and published. The democratic process under which such arrangements have been determined at the local government level have required the council to be comprised of members elected to a term in office with a more permanent management team charged with administering affairs within the municipality and also those resolutions passed by council. For the purposes of this study the terms 'local government' and 'municipality' have been employed interchangeably and refer to the same local administrative authority.

5.2 Analysis and Commentary on Tasmanian Local Council Strategic

Planning Documents

There follows a detailed review of each of the twenty-nine Tasmanian local council strategic planning documents. Key demographic and economic factors are also provided as a brief overview of each municipality before engaging with an analysis of

the data. Only data considered to advance knowledge germane to the research question has been included. These encompass perspectives and responses identified in the local council documents regarding stakeholder influences, tourism, sustainability and directly related aspects of community. Due principally to the primacy of neoliberalism as the paradigm determining both political and economic responses to competitive tourism markets, the current study has utilised Rational Choice Theory (RCT) as a lens with which to explore both stakeholder relationships to one another and their engagement with tourism markets as they affect deliberations at the municipal level. In that regard, the Tasmanian municipalities that follow have all been identified as tourism stakeholders and their choices in response to the presence of tourism have been assumed rational given the competitive economic environment to which they subscribe as participants. They are presented alphabetically with pertinent data and commentary provided for each.

5.2.1 Break O'Day Council Strategic Plan 2011

The Break O'Day municipality is located in the far northeast of Tasmania abutting the State's east coast and covering an area of 3,525 sq. km. The shire's largest community St. Helens is coastal serving as the administrative centre for the shire's population of approximately 6,253 (ABS, 2011). The region's principle industries are mining, forestry, agriculture, fishing, aquaculture and tourism. During the summer vacation season the population more than doubles with the influx of visitors marking tourism as a significant contributor to the local economy. With respect to tourism's development the local council strategic plan has identified the shire council, community and the State government as the sole stakeholders.

The Break O'Day Strategic Plan (2011) has drawn attention to its elected council's proactive approach and application of the TASEI (Table 5.1) has identified a council resolved to pursue an agenda reflective of community interests. The Break O'Day Strategic Plan has resulted in part from eight community workshops and additionally surveys devoted to eliciting community input on key issues, development of a community vision and consensus sought on identified opportunities. Summary of this last process then listed five key goal areas for focused attention over the plan's five-year life; Community Building, Environment and Planning, Economic Development, Governance and Asset Management. The document has noted that the council had

chosen to align each objective with those contained in Tasmania's State Government development policy.

As the TASEI count for 'Perspectives regarding Tourism' approximate those recorded for 'Perspectives regarding Sustainability' (Table 5.1) this may indicate the council's positive regard towards sustainable practices as part of its administrative mandate. The Plan has assigned importance to the council's achievement of economic, social and environmental wellness for its community and mention has been made of 'performance measures' designed to affect the plan's further objective of 'sustainable management of natural and built resources' (Break O'Day Council, 2011:8). Reference has also been made regarding implementation of a ten-year community asset management plan. This has been explained as being designed to 'adopt the principles of environmental sustainability in undertaking council activities' and to 'implement an environmental sustainability policy' (Break O'Day Council, 2011:9).

Table 5.1: Aggregated TASEI results for Break O'Day Strategic Plan 2011-2015

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	6	2	0
Stakeholder influence	2	1	5
Perspectives regarding Tourism	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	2	2

The Break O'Day strategic plan has identified a mandate for economic development and this includes tourism as a significant contributor. However, the document has not identified or referred to a tourism plan and comment regarding control of tourism's potential for social and environmental impacts has not been entered into. Similarly, reference to a reporting instrument with which to monitor sustainable development was not in evidence. Application of the TASEI has identified the council as articulating tourism's local development in marketing and promotional terms and has identified the shire's scenic attractions as economic assets.

5.2.2 Brighton Council Strategic Plan 2011-21

The shire of Brighton is located at the northwest edge of the Hobart metropolitan area on the banks of the Derwent River. The municipality covers an area of 171 sq. km. and has a population of over 13,763 (ABS, 2011). Since 2002, the shire has been listed as one of only three committed to the City for Climate Protection (CCP) in pursuit of working towards sustainable development (Australian Government, 2009). CCP is an Australian wide greenhouse gas reductions initiative administered by the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. The Brighton Strategic Planning document made available was a recently revised version of a ten-year plan begun in 2006. The two-page summary identified issues germane to Brighton's governance strategy and presented a council committed to improving community wellbeing. Application of the TASEI (Table 5.2) to the plan identified progressive management practices and this was exemplified elsewhere by a stand-alone report the *Brighton 2040 Value Management Study* (Lennon and Howard, 2006).

Table 5.2: Aggregated TASEI results for Brighton Strategic Plan 2011-2021

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	3	0	5
Stakeholder influence	1	0	7
Perspectives regarding Tourism	0	0	8
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	2	0	6

The Brighton Strategic Plan did not refer to tourism but identified the importance of sustainable management practices; a position confirmed elsewhere in further stand-alone purpose-specific documents that included an earlier council generated environmental report and the commissioning of *The Brighton Structure Plan* (Aurecon Australia, 2012). This latter document entered into considerable detail in respect of Brighton's sustainable development and exemplified the council's policy commitment on that issue.

5.2.3 Burnie Council Corporate Plan 2012-17

The municipality of Burnie is located in the northwest of Tasmania abutting the State's north coast and occupying an area of 611 sq.km. The shire's population of 19,234 (ABS, 2011) has been administered from the City of Burnie a port and the State's fifth largest container terminal. Following the closure of the region's paper mill in 2010 the economy has been supported by forestry, port facilities and tourism. The response of the Burnie City Council to the mill's closure and reduction in local employment has been to identify community wellbeing as the primary developmental agenda, a fact reflected in the strategic plan's central theme of economic growth. Other than council and community tourism stakeholders have not been identified in the strategic plan.

Application of the TASEI (Table 5.3) to the Burnie Strategic Plan (2012) identified municipal goals related to environmental protection, social cohesion and community wellbeing. However, beyond acknowledging the importance of sustainability the plan did not comment on the use of a reporting instrument by which sustainable development could be monitored. The term 'sustainable' was employed more generally to connote sustained growth without limits as distinct from growth managed to ensure social and environmental control. This was exemplified by 'the ongoing development and sustainability of the Burnie region through new project initiatives and assistance programs intended to enhance the local economy and employment opportunities' (Burnie City Council, 2012:21), that implied the sustainability of growth rather than sustainable growth.

Table 5.3:
Aggregated TASEI results for Burnie City Council Corporate Plan 2012-2017

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	4	1	3
Stakeholder influence	0	0	8
Perspectives regarding Tourism	4	2	2
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	3	1	4

The Burnie Strategic Planning document has noted the principle of sustainability as a necessary developmental precept for Burnie's economic recovery. The council's

general approach to tourism was identified as one of a marketing ethos with its contribution to the local economy articulated in promotional terms. Reference to a tourism plan or similar guiding strategy for its development was not in evidence although reference was made to the existence of such a plan during interviews subsequently conducted with Burnie's municipal management during phase two of the research.

5.2.4 Central Coast Council Strategic Plan 2009-14

The Central Coast municipality is located in the northwest of Tasmania and covers an area of 933 sq. km. The area's administrative centre of Ulverstone accounts for approximately half of the shire's total population of 20,940 (ABS, 2011). The shire's economic base has comprised a mix of primary industry, processing, wharf facilities and tourism. Application of the TASEI to the Central Coast Strategic Plan (Table 5.4) identified the primary tourism development stakeholders as the Central Coast Council and its community with marginal reference made to Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements between council and local business interests.

The degree of focus accorded community values by the Central Coast council suggested that a generally positive relationship existed between council and community. The general tone of the Strategic Plan was encapsulated in the council's comprehensive vision Statement,

We are a vibrant, thriving community that draws inspiration and opportunity from [our] natural beauty, land and people. Our clever industries and productive rural resources support economically viable communities as part of a thriving region, meeting all challenges with energy and innovation'.

(Central Coast Strategic Plan, 2009:4)

The plan conferred significant importance regarding the issue of sustainability with the term employed frequently throughout the document's text. A stand-alone council document *The Climate Change Action Plan* has provided for further specifics regarding the implementation of sustainable practice. The essence of this treatise was rendered by the council as 'The Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure' and was included as Strategic Direction No 4 in the document. The plan also included detailed goals for environmental protection and social cohesion. Reference concerning the use

of a reporting instrument with which to monitor sustainable development was not referred to.

Table 5.4: Aggregated TASEI results for Central Coast Strategic Plan 2009-2014

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	4	1	3
Stakeholder influence	1	1	6
Perspectives regarding Tourism	4	0	4
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	2	2	4

The Central Coast strategic plan declared its community in favour of tourism and identified the destination's scenic attractions as economic assets and a source of revenue. *The Central Coast Strategic Plan 2009-2014* did not directly address the issue of tourism's development, but an earlier stand-alone tourism development strategy *The Coast to Canyon Experience 2006* developed as a two-volume set in conjunction with the Tasmanian State Government detailed aspects of tourism's economic potential. Similarly, *The Central Coast Local Visitor Strategy* (2006) produced by council with limited input from contracted consultants was an objective appraisal of the shire's tourism potential. The document noted that while geographically well endowed and with an abundance of environmental attractions the area has lacked range, depth and quality of market-ready visitor product, services and infrastructure. The document proceeded to identify the importance of developing tourism in a staged, manageable and sustainable way recommending the establishment of guiding principles, a situational assessment, market research analysis, the establishment of priority issues and recognition of tourism's developmental implications.

5.2.5 Central Highlands Strategic Plan 2009-14

The Central Highlands municipality is located at Tasmania's geographic centre and covers an area of 7,982 sq. km. with a population of 2,334 (ABS, 2011) administered from Hamilton. Beyond housing large and diverse agriculture and livestock industries the region is also identified with forestry, fishing, power production and tourism. The Central Highlands Economic Plan (2009) has noted that the shire's essentially rural

economy and population have been in decline. These concerns have been reflected in the plan's primarily focus for community development (Table 5.5). To address this issue the council had contracted with consultants Sinclair Knight Merz of Victoria in the preparation of an exhaustive economic plan for the municipality.

Both the community and its representative council have been identified as the primary stakeholders in regard to tourism's development but with reference also made to State Government agencies, the local government association and Public Private Partnership arrangements. The general impart of the Central Highlands Strategic Plan is of a council concerned to join with and provide community leadership. To this end the issue of community values has received strong representation in respect of resident concerns, quality of life and whole-of-community wellbeing.

Table 5.5:
Aggregated TASEI results for Central Highlands Strategic Plan 2009-2014

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	6	1	1
Stakeholder influence	4	0	4
Perspectives regarding Tourism	3	2	3
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	1	2	5

On the four occasions where the Central Highlands Strategic Planning document had employed the word 'sustainability' the term was applied generally such as exemplified by seeking 'sustainable economic growth' (Central Highlands Council, 2009:6). Application of the TASEI (Table 5.5) suggested that focus on sustainability has received only marginal attention. Similarly, environmental issues dealt with under Development and Environmental Services identified climate change, natural asset management and energy efficiency but with no reference made regarding how management for sustainable outcomes would be approached.

The Central Highlands Strategic Plan reflected the council's commitment to improving its community's wellbeing as an attempt to counter the austerity occasioned by its declining population. In an attempt to stabilise the falling population size economic development and employment has received focused attention. Tourism

was identified as a key factor in economic growth and an audit of the shire's attractions were identified as tourism product. The plan declared the council's primary objective as being to increase the number of tourists by ten per cent in the near term and this to double in the long term. While to this end the Strategic Plan articulated tourism's development in marketing and promotional terms no reference was made to a tourism plan or strategy for its achievement.

5.2.6 Circular Head Council Strategic Plan 2009-14

The Circular Head municipality is located in the far northwest of Tasmania and occupies an area of 4,897 sq. km. Smithton is the administrative centre for the shire's population of 8,129 (ABS, 2011). The region is supported by a diverse economy comprised of dairy and prime beef production, forestry, agriculture, processing, aquaculture, fishing and tourism. The colonial township of Stanley at the base of 'The Nut' a volcanic remnant has been identified as one of Tasmania's iconic tourism attractions. Stanley was the subject of the earlier *Stanley Guided Development Plan* (McCall, Miller and Eyles, 2005). The Circular Head planning document (2008) was prepared by Collins Anderson Management, Melbourne.

The Circular Head Council identified its leadership function as achieving a balance between the needs of industry and business, the community and the environment factors subsequently verified through application of the TASEI (Table 5.6). In this regard, the strategic plan declared for achieving objectives based on social, economic and environmental considerations. The plan demonstrated a strong proactive relationship between council and community with a series of earlier community forums identified as the basis for subsequent objectives that had provided focus for the 2009-2014 plan. The document identified the council and its community as major stakeholders in tourism's development, but also noted external partnerships with significant others whose participation was acknowledged as acting to influence the delivery of services.

The term 'sustainable' was used variously to describe; 'sustainable management', 'sustainable infrastructure', 'sustainable service delivery', 'sustainable economy', 'sustainable development' and 'financial sustainability' in effect nullifying the term's

precision. However, reference to a reporting instrument with which to manage and monitor the implementation of sustainability was not in evidence.

Table 5.6:
Aggregated TASEI results for Circular Head Strategic Plan 2009-2014

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	7	1	0
Stakeholder influence	2	2	4
Perspectives regarding Tourism	4	1	3
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	3	1	4

Tourism was identified in the strategic plan as a significant driver of the shire's economy and scenic attractions were articulated in marketing and promotional terms as tourism assets. Application of the TASEI (Table 5.6) indicated that the council's approach to tourism's development was primarily one of generating economic growth. Elsewhere in the plan, this was confirmed by comment referring to the economic value of the local environment as 'maximising our natural and built attractions to achieve our tourism potential' and 'unique natural attributes ideal as an eco-tourism destination' (Collins Anderson, 2008:10).

5.2.7 Clarence Council Strategic Plan 2010-15

The municipality of Clarence is located in Tasmania's southeast immediately northeast of Hobart City on the Derwent River's eastern shore. Relative to other Tasmanian shires Clarence occupies a modest 378 sq. km. but is home to a population of 50,549 (ABS, 2011). The shire's close proximity to the Tasmanian capital Hobart has had a significant influence on Clarence's economic structure which includes retail, education, health, property, building and trade. Clarence also houses Tasmania's principal international air terminal. The strategic plan identified economic development and that included tourism as primary considerations when planning.

Table 5.7:
Aggregated TASEI results for Clarence Council Strategic Plan 2010-2015

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	5	1	2
Stakeholder influence	1	1	6
Perspectives regarding Tourism	2	2	4
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	2	0	6

The Clarence City Council's strategic plan (2010) was presented as a set of six goal areas each with an attendant sub-group of strategies mandated for completion; Social Inclusion, Prosperity, Environment, Governance, Leadership and Financial Management. Collectively these defined the council's strategic direction through its five-year term. The plan did not refer directly to stakeholder participation in tourism other than stating the council's intention of partnering with the State Government and industry groups in pursuit of community priorities.

The Plan expressed a clear commitment to maintaining standards of transparency and effective governance with community participation openly advocated. Also noted as priorities were the council's concern to achieve whole-of-community values, an overall quality of life and to deliver on issues critical to resident's interests.

The Clarence Strategic Plan has identified social, environmental and economic outcomes as long-term objectives. Throughout the document the term 'sustainability' appeared four times but was employed in different and non-specific contexts. Overall the issue of management for sustainable outcomes did not receive focused attention and reference linking the concept of sustainability to environmental and social agendas was not in evidence. Attention was given to the impact of climate change on Clarence's Coastal Areas, but there was no reference regarding a reporting instrument with which to monitor the sustainability of the council's environmental objectives.

Under the goal of 'prosperity' the Clarence Strategic Plan identified economic growth as a subject for proactive attention. Key locality clusters were nominated for economic development with supporting infrastructure. The plan articulated tourism's

local development in marketing and promotional terms and both natural and built assets were identified as part of the stated aim of developing Clarence as a tourism focal point in Tasmania. However, tourism was otherwise dealt with as a subset of the overall economic plan while reference to a tourism plan or strategy for its development was not present.

5.2.8 Derwent Valley Council Strategic Plan 2011-15

The Derwent Valley Shire is located in Tasmania's south west of Hobart City and named for the river coursing much of its length. The municipality occupies an area of 4,108 sq. km. and is home to a population of 9,542 (ABS, 2011). The shire's economy is based on rural industries that include fruit, hops, grazing, tourism and light industry with some residents commuting to Hobart for employment. The region's administrative centre is located in New Norfolk a historic township straddling the Derwent River. An assessment of the Derwent Valley Strategic Plan based on application of the TASEI suggested a modest response by council to its stated objectives (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8:
Aggregated TASEI results for Derwent Valley Strategic Plan 2011-2015

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	3	1	4
Stakeholder influence	2	1	5
Perspectives regarding Tourism	2	0	6
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	2	0	6

The Derwent Valley Strategic Plan (2011) identified both council and community as primary stakeholders of tourism development, but further declared the council's amenability to Public Private Partnerships with business sector participants as sources of services and development. The council has declared its intension of working with the community to build upon plans and ideas with imagination. It has declared itself community focused, committed to openness, communication and participation where collaborative relationships are forged through identification of common ground. The key areas of focus identified in the planning document were; Infrastructure and Services, Social, Economic, Environmental and Financial objectives.

The Strategic Plan committed to the provision of social, economic and environmental objectives as the basis for the council's approach to management and administration. Detail was provided in respect of economic development as were social and environmental objectives including the management of environmental resources. Concern was noted regarding the potential threat of rising river levels resulting from climate change. The plan identified the municipality's environment and heritage capital as opportunities for business and tourism. However, reference to plans to progress sustainability in respect of social and environmental management were not in evidence. The Derwent Valley Plan identified the importance of economic growth and the reinvigoration of the New Norfolk CBD in pursuit of encouraging increased tourist traffic. Tourism was identified as a significant factor in the council's economic aspirations, however identification of a plan for tourism's development was not in evidence.

5.2.9 Devonport Council Strategic Plan 2009-30

The Devonport Shire is located in the north of Tasmania on the State's northern coast and occupies an area of 111 sq. km. supporting a population of 25,249 (ABS, 2011). Devonport provides the point of departure for ferry connections to the Australian mainland. The port facilities reflect a robust economy and a constant influx of mainland and international visitors continue to access Tasmania via the port's passenger terminal. The Shire's strategic plan identified five objectives addressed by council: Environment, Development, Economy, Community and Governance. The plan also identified council and community as stakeholders in tourism's development but also participating tourism business operatives, community groups, neighbouring councils, Tasmanian State Government agencies and Public Private Partnerships. For the 'Community Values' theme, six of the eight TASEI indicators (Table 5.9) identified a strong sense of community.

The plan committed to integrating sustainability with respect to agendas for the community's social, economic and environmental health. Attention was also directed to the council's stated intention of conserving the current environmental status for future generations. To this end, links were identified with State Government goals in the *Tasmania Together 2020* Strategic Plan (Tasmania Together Progress Board, 2006). The need to manage for sustainability was also identified as a precondition for

energy use, planning for climate change, emissions control, water quality and development issues. Under Outcome 2.3 the strategic plan referred to management of long-term strategic assets. Reference to a reporting instrument for management of the sustainability of long-term assets was not in evidence.

Table 5.9: Aggregated TASEI results for Devonport Strategic Plan 2009-2030

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	6	0	2
Stakeholder influence	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Tourism	3	1	4
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	3	0	5

In respect of tourism the strategic plan noted the need for a Devonport brand with which to maximise competitive market advantage and to support current development strategies. The plan identified the council's intention to utilise available built and natural assets in pursuit of increased tourism traffic. To this end natural attractions were identified as tourism product and articulated in promotional and marketing terms. Reference concerning the existence of a tourism plan or strategy was not in evidence.

5.2.10 Dorset Council Strategic Plan 2008-12

The Shire of Dorset is located at the far northeast corner of Tasmania and occupies an area of 3,227 sq. km. The economy is based primarily on agriculture, forestry, mining and tourism, supports a local population of 7,149 (ABS, 2011) and is administered from the town of Scottsdale. In 1996 the Dorset council contracted with external consultants to produce *The Dorset Sustainable Development Strategy* (Gutteridge, Haskins and Davey, 1996) intended to establish parameters for responsible development in the Dorset Municipality. The report has continued to serve as the basis for the Dorset Strategic Plan recently underpinned by the appointment of a sustainable development manager.

The Dorset Strategic Plan (2008) identified four strategic objectives as the basis for the council's five-year administrative term with emphasis placed on long-term goals.

Environmental Sustainability in particular was given priority followed by Community Wellbeing, Social and Economic Development and Governance. The strategic plan presented the council as overtly proactive towards its community, with the declared intention of managing stakeholder relationships for positive outcomes. Several stakeholders, were identified as participants in the shire's development of tourism: business operatives, the local government Association, Northern Tasmania Development, State Government, Federal Government and Public Private Partnership arrangements with local industry. Further to this a statement within the document committed to support the aspirations of its stakeholders 'We reflect, represent, promote and respond to the needs of the community, seek to encourage and listen to local views and involve local people and partners' (Dorset Council, 2008:2).

Table 5.10:
Aggregated TASEI results for Dorset Council Strategic Plan 2008-2012

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	3	0	5
Stakeholder influence	4	0	4
Perspectives regarding Tourism	1	0	7
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

The strategic plan has advocated the use of NRM principles to optimise use and protection of natural resources. The council when advocating economic growth and development employed the term 'sustainable'. Economic growth was allotted prominence in the plan but also sustainability particularly with respect to environmental management. Mention of a reporting instrument with which to progress management and monitoring of sustainability was not identified.

The strategic plan's 'Social and Economic Development' category identified the council's wish to maximise economic development. To this end goals were linked to those identified in the Tasmanian State Government's developmental policy document *Tasmania Together 2020* (Tasmania Together Progress Board, 2010). A tourism specific plan for Dorset commissioned from Sinclair Knight Merz (2008), presented an exclusively economic treatise in which tourism was extolled for its economic value identifying it as the region's second largest employer after the

combined value of agriculture, forestry and fishing. A further report was also commissioned *The Dorset Tourism Strategy* (Denham and Ruzzene, 2011). The document was a marketing appraisal and plan concerned to position Dorset as tourism product in the Tasmanian tourism market. The report was given over exclusively to a marketing strategy and addressed a perceived shortfall in visitors to the region by proposing six strategic directions that utilised the shire's geography and icons as tourism product.

5.2.11 Flinders Island Council Strategic Plan 2011

The Flinders Island municipality is located off the northeast coast of Tasmania and covers an area of 1,996 sq. km. The economy based on a mix of rural production, service activities and tourism supports a population of 906 (ABS, 2011). The shire's administrative centre Whitemark is located midway along the island's western coast. The Flinders Island Strategic Plan has reflected the council's keen awareness of the island's geographic constraints particularly with respect to the development of tourism. The island's finite environmental resource base was singled out for particular attention alongside its limited social capital. Both were identified as pivotal to the wellbeing of the island's future generations. The Flinders Island Strategic Plan (2011) an exhaustive and detailed document presented as a well-structured management plan in which an objective approach confronted the potential for economic growth as conflicting with the necessity of applying environmental constraints. In respect of the council's economic aspirations tourism's development was identified as an important component of the island's economic projections but with the caveat that cautioned 'environmental sustainability is the key platform supporting development and operational decisions' (Flinders Council (2011:9).

Table 5.11:
Aggregated TASEI results for Flinders Island Council Strategic Plan 2011

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	5	2	1
Stakeholder influence	4	0	4
Perspectives regarding Tourism	6	0	2
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	8	0	0

The Flinders Strategic Plan identified its community as the primary stakeholder in tourism's development a fact reflected in the high TASEI count recorded for Community Values (Table 5.11). Stakeholder influences regarding tourism included the State Government and Public Private Partnership arrangements with business and industry. Other stakeholders worthy of mention, but not identified specifically in the Strategic Plan were the Flinders Island Tourism Association and contracted specialists Pitt and Sherry of Brisbane who were commissioned to produce the Flinders Structural Plan to achieve sustainability.

Application of the TASEI also recorded strong counts for Perspectives of Tourism and Perspectives regarding Sustainability (Table 5.11). The Flinders Island Plan summarised 'Our planning, building policy and services framework must support achievement of our social, economic and environmental goals' (Flinders Council (2011:19). With respect to tourism on Flinders Island a community workshop identified issues concerning conservation in respect of the environmental impact occasioned by increased visitor numbers and particularly in respect of the island's social and environmental integrity. Other concerns singled out for attention were extensive road fatalities involving native fauna, but also as a direct result of hunting. Both issues were identified as conflicting with the intended projection of Flinders Island as a nature-based destination. Reference to a reporting instrument with which to monitor sustainable outcomes for goals identified in the policy framework were not included.

In addition to comment contained in the strategic plan other tourism specific stand-alone documents were identified. The *Nature Based Tourism Market Feasibility Study* (Mackay, 2010) identified Flinders Island as a suitable site for development as a nature-based tourism product. The document was presented as a marketing study assessing the fit of the Flinders tourism product to several niche markets. The document identified several categories matched to visitor experiences that fell within the nature-based genre including rock climbing, walking trails, diving and snorkeling, but also hunting.

5.2.12 George Town Council Strategic Plan 2012-17

The George Town Shire is located on Tasmania's northeast coastline and occupies an area of 653 sq. km. with a population of 6,695 (ABS, 2011). At two pages the George Town Strategic Plan presents as a modest document in which the council have identified five administrative strategies; Organisational Accountability, Business and Economic Development, Community Wellbeing, Natural Environment and Heritage and Built Environment. In the plan's short text the term 'community' was referred to twenty-six times and identified the shire as the sole stakeholder in tourism's development. A cursory reference was made regarding climate change and the requirement that council stay informed on the issue.

Table 5.12:
Aggregated TASEI results for George Town Strategic Plan 2012-2017

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	2	1	5
Stakeholder influence	0	0	8
Perspectives regarding Tourism	2	0	6
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	3	0	5

The George Town Strategic Plan (2012) identified the importance of implementing the principle of sustainability and thereafter the term 'sustainable' was applied with equal emphasis to other issues that included 'sustainable principles', 'sustainable amenity' and 'sustainable growth'. The George Town council also declared its intention of pursuing economic development for the long-term sustainability of the municipality. The plan while advocating support for environmentally sustainable principles also promoted commodification of the region's environmental capital as tourism product. No evidence of a reporting instrument with which to monitor the implementation of sustainability was noted. The document articulated tourism's development for George Town in promotional and marketing terms and nominated the town centre, environmental areas, places of significant heritage and trails as opportunities for tourism development. Reference to a tourism plan or strategy for tourism's development was not noted.

5.2.13 Glamorgan Spring Bay Council Strategic Plan 2006-11

The Glamorgan Spring Bay Municipality is located on Tasmania's east coast and occupies an area of 2,591 sq. km. The shire's economy comprising seafood processing, engineering, forestry, agriculture and tourism has supported a population of 4,333 (ABS, 2011). The shire's strategic plan is presented as a prioritised system comprising seven key result areas; Community Wellbeing, Natural Environment, Planned Environment, Our People, Infrastructure and Services, Organisational Development and Financial Management.

Other than the shire's community stakeholders in tourism's development were identified as the State government, unspecified Public Private Partnership arrangements with regional businesses, industry associations and contracted specialists. Stand-alone tourism plans and strategies *The Freycinet Coast Tourism Strategy* (2004) and *The Triabunna-Orford and Maria Island Visitor Strategy* (2011) have dealt with specific aspects of the council's engagement with tourism.

Table 5.13:
Aggregated TASEI results for Glamorgan Spring Bay Strategic Plan 2006-2011

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	3	1	4
Stakeholder influence	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Tourism	2	0	6
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	1	3

The Glamorgan-Spring Bay Strategic Plan (2006) identified the council's commitment to address whole-of-community concerns and quality of life issues and used terms such as 'social capital' and 'social sustainability'. As an extension to this the document also linked environmental values with the community's social and economic wellbeing. The mayor's address located on the document's leading page committed the council to 'meet the challenges of achieving social, financial and environmental sustainability' (Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council, 2006:2). Subsequently, references to social, economic and environmental sustainability throughout the document confirmed the Glamorgan Spring Bay council's commitment (Table 5.13). Further evidence regarding sustainability was reflected in

the plan's identification of remedial procedures involving 'strategic risk analysis' (Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council, 2006:14).

The plan identified the council's intention to pursue economic growth and references to this were repeatedly made with tourism identified as a central factor in its achievement. The plan referred to progress made on an economic development plan as well as an undertaking to commission a visitor survey. Reference was also made regarding use of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) as a monitoring instrument for financial accountability.

5.2.14 Glenorchy City Council Strategic Plan 2011-16

The Glenorchy City Shire, located immediately northwest of Hobart occupies an area of 121 sq. km. and is home to a population of 44,602 (ABS, 2011). The municipality's close proximity to Hobart has in more recent times united it geographically as an outer suburb of the State's capital a fact reflected in Glenorchy's compact residential zoning. By virtue of its proximity to Hobart the shire has enjoyed a vibrant economy that has included shipbuilding, manufacturing, property development, retail and tourism. With respect to Glenorchy's general development the council has nominated a quadruple bottom-line framework comprising community, economy, environment and governance as an administrative framework. Reporting intended to achieve accountability for this framework was dependent on regular monitoring of community satisfaction levels.

The Glenorchy Strategic Plan (2011) identified the community as the major stakeholder for tourism with reference also made to the Tasmanian Government, Public Private Partnership arrangements and tourism industry operatives. The plan devoted considerable attention to community issues and application of the TASEI recorded a positive count for all but one indicator in the category 'Community Values' (Table 5.14). The document has referred to a sub-plan for community and a committee, Team Glenorchy, comprised of business and community leaders. The sub-plan was tasked with addressing long-term issues identified as important by the community.

Table 5.14:
Aggregated TASEI results for Glenorchy City Strategic Plan 2011-2016

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	7	0	1
Stakeholder influence	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Tourism	4	0	4
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	3	1	4

The Glenorchy Strategic Plan has made reference to the issue of sustainability but in non-specific terms where it was employed to connote a wish to ‘retain’ or ‘advance’ the subject to which it was conjoined. Contextually the word sustainability was applied as a developmental precept for achieving social cohesion, community wellbeing and environmental protection while also being employed to define approaches to governance, employment and financial management. No reference was made to a reporting instrument with which to monitor the implementation of sustainability.

The Glenorchy Strategic Plan identified the council’s commitment to grow tourism volume and noted that the community was in favour of tourism’s development. However, while the subject was referred to in promotional and marketing terms little space was otherwise allocated in the plan for further discussion. This could be explained by the presence of a major development proposal commissioned as a stand-alone document *The Glenorchy Wilkinsons Point and Elwick Bay Precinct Master Plan* (2008). This ambitious project current at the time of this study was intended to service the needs of both community and visitors.

5.2.15 Hobart City Council Strategic Plan 2008-13

Hobart City municipality is located in Tasmania’s south and occupies an area of 78 sq. km., housing a population of 48,801 (ABS, 2011). As Tasmania’s State capital Hobart is also the seat of the State Government, its legislature and financial centre. The Hobart City Strategic Plan has divided the council’s planning programme into seven Future Development (FD) criteria with for example FD2 given over to strategic environmental objectives and FD7 given over to economic development. FD6, but

also other categories within the plan, have focused on issues of community development and social cohesion. The plan identified community as the primary stakeholder in tourism (Table 5.15) but with mention made of Public Private Partnership arrangements with local business and industry. The plan identified the council as strongly committed to serve community interests and with goals oriented to issues critical to resident's interests, whole-of-community values, and overall quality of life.

The Hobart City Strategic Plan (2008) identified commitment to the integration of the principles of sustainability in its planning deliberations. In this respect the plan's environmental awareness objective (FD2) included council strategies for improving energy use efficiency and a program employing a 'strategic measurement system' (Hobart City Council, 2008:2) designed to constantly monitor progress and report annually. The plan also drew attention to the issue of adequately addressing the impacts of climate change on the shire.

Table 5.15: Aggregated TASEI results for Hobart Strategic Plan 2008-2013

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	5	0	3
Stakeholder influence	1	0	7
Perspectives regarding Tourism	4	0	4
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

The Hobart Council identified economic development for each FD as a reflection of its central importance for the vision for the city. Elsewhere in the document 'promoting Hobart's competitive advantages' (Hobart City Council, 2008:22), identified the fusion of tourism with the council's economic agenda, but that this was to proceed with regard to tourism's environmental impact. The plan's solo reference to tourism advised that council would 'Investigate [its] role in tourism and destination marketing and develop a supporting strategy' (Hobart City Council, 2008:21). No reference to a tourism specific plan or strategy was in evidence, but council sub-committees such as the Marketing and Events Committee were tasked with addressing specific tourism categories as exemplified by deliberations regarding growth of the

cruise ship sector and its infrastructural implications for the city.

5.2.16 Huon Valley Council Strategic Plan 2010-15

Huon Valley Shire is located on Tasmania's south coast and occupies an area of 5,507 sq. km. supporting a population of 14,564 (ABS, 2011). The Huon Valley Strategic Plan has identified five areas of focus resulting from extensive community consultations. These deliberations have in turn been developed in consideration of earlier and long-range community plans. The council identified Key Performance Indicators (KPI) as a reporting instrument for ensuring achievement of its primary objectives and to ensure accountability from the shire's departmental activities.

Table 5.16:
Aggregated TASEI results for Huon Valley Council Strategic Plan 2010-2015

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	6	0	2
Stakeholder influence	2	1	5
Perspectives regarding Tourism	7	0	1
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

The Huon Valley Strategic Plan (2010) identified the community as the primary stakeholder in tourism's development (Table 5.16), but with mention made of participating businesses and consultancy services engaged in the planning and preparation of a tourism development strategy. Application of the TASEI identified the council as being community oriented a fact supported by the high word frequency count recorded for 'community' (Table 5.16). The plan via the council's eight stated objectives identified improvements in economic growth as fundamental to the future of the shire's modest economy. In pursuit of securing the community's prosperity the plan identified the dual aspirations of environmental sustainability and economic development.

The strategic plan's liberal application of the term 'sustainability' tended to lessen the relevance of its use. The twenty-nine instances were variously applied as; 'sustainable economic advantage', 'sustainable operations', 'sustainable human development', 'sustainable land use', 'sustainable township' and 'sustainable interaction'. Elsewhere

the document stated ‘achieve[ing] sustainable economic advantage by building on the valley’s natural assets’ (Huon Valley Council, 2010:12). This statement appeared to suggest that commodification of the local environment as tourism product, was the favoured route for achieving the community’s economic prosperity. The strategic plan identified the potential benefits from increased tourism and confirmed its intention to ‘increase tourist visits, tourist spending and tourist length of stay’ (Huon Valley Council, 2010:12). No reference to a reporting instrument with which to manage the Huon Valley’s environmental assets sustainably in the wake of tourism’s projected growth was present.

A stand-alone tourism plan *Huon Valley Regional Tourism Strategy* (Lebski, 2009) predated publication of the current municipal strategic plan. This document served primarily as a marketing appraisal for the shire and was concerned to quantify visitor trends, local accommodation and visitor spend. By these and related measures the document proceeded to assess the potential for tourism’s development in the Huon Valley. The report offered balanced comment acknowledging the presence of factors working against Huon Valley’s prospects for tourism growth. The report referred to the need for sustainable planning with comment added regarding the social and environmental costs associated with tourism’s unmanaged development on local communities.

5.2.17 Kentish Council Strategic Plan 2009-14

The Kentish Shire is located in Tasmania’s northwest and occupies an area of 1,156 sq. km. The shire’s economy based on agriculture, forestry, fishing, manufacturing, construction, retail and tourism supports a population of 5,805 (ABS, 2011). The Kentish Strategic Plan has identified the council as strongly community oriented a fact supported by the high word frequency count recorded for ‘community’ (Table 5.18). The plan has also acknowledged the community and other stakeholders as being in favour of increased tourism. Other tourism stakeholders identified were the Local Tourism Authority (LTA), the Tasmanian State government and local tourism business operatives. Consultants had been contracted to survey and report on resident satisfaction levels regarding the council’s services.

The Kentish Council Strategic Plan (2009) presented an overtly proactive council committed to addressing its community's concerns. Prior to the plan's publication council had asked its community to identify future economic, social and environmental objectives. Three strategic directions had subsequently emerged that provided the basis for the council's mandate: financial sustainability, environmental sustainability and social cohesion. In addressing these three directions the council nominated environmental sustainability as its highest priority.

Accordingly, the current strategic plan noted 'Managing the balance between economic growth and conservation of our natural environment is a high priority [and] must be undertaken in a sustainable manner' (Kentish Council, 2009:5). The plan was reflective of a meaningful interaction between council and community in respect of environmental planning a position supported by the high word frequency count recorded for 'sustainability' (Appendix B). However, no reference was made regarding a reporting instrument with which to monitor the success of those objectives declared central to the Kentish Strategic Plan.

Table 5.17: Aggregated TASEI results for Kentish Strategic Plan 2009-2014

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	5	1	2
Stakeholder influence	5	0	3
Perspectives regarding Tourism	5	1	2
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

Application of the TASEI suggested that both council and community should acknowledge the benefits believed to follow from tourism's development with economic output from increased tourism identified as a key performance measure. The council advised that it had adopted several community initiatives for due consideration before engaging with the tourism market. The Team Kentish Tourism Operator's Network was established and the strategic plan stated that their objective was to attract tourism groups, increase visitor numbers and length of stay. However, reference to a tourism plan or tourism development strategy was not available.

5.2.18 King Island Council Strategic Plan 2011-20

The King Island Shire is located off the northwest coast of Tasmania lying approximately halfway between Tasmania and mainland Australia. King Island covers an area of 1,095 sq. km. and is part of the Hunter group of islands located in Bass Strait. The island's economy has been comprised of fishing, agriculture, retail and tourism and supported a population of 1,605 (ABS, 2011). A joint project between the Cradle Coast Authority, Department of Economic Development, The Sustainable Regions Program and King Island Council has determined that visitor numbers to the Island should be increased commensurate with the sustainable development of its tourism potential. A commissioned marketing report, *The King Island Visitor Survey* has determined the island's tourism potential from increased visitation.

The King Island Strategic Plan selected for analysis was a revision of an earlier document. The plan reflected a modest economy in which limited revenues acted to constrain effective governance. The plan identified five goals by which council would attempt to sustain the island's community; economic viability, natural environment, community wellbeing, infrastructure and the council's financial sustainability. In respect of limits to the council's influence the strategic plan noted that the rate of progress on many major agenda items were ultimately dependent on political decisions taken at Federal and State Government levels.

Table 5.18: Aggregated TASEI results for King Island Strategic Plan 2011-2020

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	2	0	6
Stakeholder influence	2	0	6
Perspectives regarding Tourism	2	0	6
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	1	1	6

The council identified the community as the major stakeholder in tourism's development, but also included State and Federal Governments and local organisations and in particular the Cradle Coast Authority. The council identified the need to provide strong leadership in pursuit of the island's economic, social, environmental and cultural sustainability. Beyond this single reference, use of the

term ‘sustainability’ was otherwise used to express an ideal describing the council’s financial viability. Reference to a reporting instrument employed for the management of economic, social and environmental sustainability was not in evidence.

Application of the TASEI (Table 5.18) indicated that the island’s economic development was recognised as the key factor in the achievement of all other goals. To this end the council expressed the need to market King Island as a competitive tourism product and this was articulated in marketing and promotional terms. A marketing brand was advocated, new business encouraged and the island’s natural environment was considered in terms of its economic value. However, the council’s focus on economic growth and tourism in particular was not supported by reference to a tourism plan or strategy.

Production of *The King Island Visitor Survey* (King Island Council, 2009) attempted to capture and understand visitor demographics for the island. The survey’s purpose was to provide an improved database for future tourism planning decisions. The resulting report was considered to be well structured and comprehensive. The purpose of the report was to support the council’s rationale that the island’s economy would benefit from increased visitation. The structure of the analysis dealt systematically with the issue of visitor traffic and included; visitor information sources, visitor spending, expectations, visitor origins and travel purpose.

5.2.19 Kingborough Council Strategic Plan 2010-20

Kingborough Shire is located in Tasmania’s southwest and shares a common border with Hobart City to its north. The shire occupies an area of 720 sq. km. and is home to a population of 31,544 (ABS, 2011). The Kingborough Strategic Plan is reflective of a council strongly committed to act on the needs of its residents (Table 6.20). The Kingborough community has been identified as the shire’s primary stakeholder in tourism’s development, but with the State Government, Public Private Partnership arrangements and consultancy services also noted as stakeholders. The strategic plan has identified significant council community interaction and this was supported by a high word frequency count recorded for ‘community’ (Appendix B).

With respect to sustainability the Kingborough Strategic Plan identified council's commitment to manage the community's future development sustainably a position reflected in *Kingborough Directions* a stand-alone companion volume to the strategic plan which identified the importance accorded sustainability for Kingborough's continued social wellness. 'At some point, it will be necessary for [Kingborough] as a community to consider what is our optimum size and whether there is justification for restricting future development and population growth'. (*Kingborough Directions*, p7).

Table 5.19:
Aggregated TASEI results for Kingborough Strategic Plan 2010-2015

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	7	0	1
Stakeholder influence	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Tourism	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

Application of the TASEI indicated awareness by the council of the concept of sustainability and its relevance as a precondition for development. The principle of sustainability was also identified in respect of environmental protection, social cohesion and community wellbeing. The term 'sustainable' was employed to define the council's economic aspirations as exemplified by 'sustainable local enterprises' and 'sustainable economic development'. No reference was made to a reporting instrument with which to monitor the application of sustainability principles for environmental, social or economic planning criteria.

The Kingborough Strategic Plan advocated the development of tourism as a significant facet of the municipality's economic agenda. The plan referred to a strategy for tourism's development and the issue was articulated in marketing and promotional terms. Reference to a tourism plan or strategy was not in evidence.

5.2.20 Latrobe Council Strategic Plan 2012-17

The Latrobe municipality is located on Tasmania's central north coast and occupies an area of 600 sq. km. The region's population of 8,855 (ABS, 2011) is supported by

an economy consisting primarily of fruit and livestock exports, fishing and tourism with the town of Latrobe serving as the shire's administrative centre. The Latrobe Strategic Plan defines the council as growth oriented with tourism considered but one factor contributing to its economic development. The plan has identified participation by various stakeholders in tourism's development that include the Latrobe community, the Local Tourism Authority, local tourism business operatives, The Regional Tourism Organisation and Public Private Partnership arrangements.

Table 5.20: Aggregated TASEI results for Latrobe Strategic Plan 2012-2017

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	6	1	1
Stakeholder influence	6	0	2
Perspectives regarding Tourism	4	0	4
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	2	0	6

The Latrobe Council Strategic Plan (2012) reflected good council/community relations with consensus apparent regarding tourism's development. This was supported through application of the TASEI which recorded a positive count for 'Community values' (Table 5.20). The planning document identified environmental protection, social cohesion and community wellbeing, as issues receiving particular attention. A minor reference was present regarding sustainable approaches in respect of development. Economic, social and environmental criteria, while identified in the plan, was not linked to a reporting instrument for monitoring and management purposes.

With respect to tourism, accelerated residential development at Port Sorell in the shire's northeast contributed significantly to growth in local visitation with the population reported to double from the influx of visitors vacationing during the summer season. This situation was the subject of a review in the report *The Port Sorrell and Environs Strategic Plan: Outcomes and Recommendations* commissioned from environmental consultants Morris and Kaufman (2008:10) who were critical of development due to its essentially unsustainable form and structure. 'Port Sorrell has grown in a manner now considered unsustainable due to high car dependency,

inadequate provision of jobs and services, poor management of streams, vegetation and habitat resources and energy inefficient buildings’.

5.2.21 Launceston City Council Strategic Plan 2008-13

The Launceston municipality is located in Tasmania’s northeast and covers an area of 1,413 sq. km. with a population of 64,983 (ABS, 2011). The Launceston Strategic Plan is based on an earlier document *Vision 2020* that documents extensive consultation with the Launceston community. Launceston’s relatively isolated geographic location is an issue identified early in the strategic plan and one challenging the council’s aspirations for economic development. The Launceston City Council Strategic Plan (2008) identified the community as the primary stakeholder in tourism development with council demonstrating a commitment to follow through on resident’s concerns. Other stakeholders identified were the State Government and contracted specialists.

Table 5.21: Aggregated TASEI results for Launceston Strategic Plan 2008-2013

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	6	0	2
Stakeholder influence	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Tourism	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

The municipality’s vision statement ‘Launceston, a thriving and sustainable municipality’ (Launceston City Council, 2008:5), expressed a wish to achieve economic growth, but with the caveat that this be achieved sustainability. With respect to environmental sustainability the strategic plan identified several risk issues requiring urgent attention and that included addressing the impacts of climate change. The plan also cautioned regarding ‘failure to respond to specific environmental issues’ (Launceston City Council, 2008:7) as undermining the councils ongoing concern to address issues of clean air and water quality. The council has bestowed significant importance to the issue of sustainability with in 2009 a proposed Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality Training Centre. Although Launceston’s strategic plan had encapsulated the principle of social, economic and environmental

accountability reference to a reporting framework with which to monitor and manage its implementation was not in evidence.

The strategic plan has made reference to the Stafford Group, consultants commissioned to produce a comprehensive ten-year tourism plan for Launceston. The report identified the need to situate Launceston as the economic driver for tourism in the Northern Tasmanian region. *The Launceston Tourism Plan* (Stafford Group, 2012) provided a long-term strategic plan for tourism that encompassed the majority of Tasmania's north. Beyond furnishing a market appraisal the report was primarily concerned with presenting a functional marketing and promotional strategy. In this regard, the report was comprehensive and included a vision and goals, identified challenges and defined the roles and responsibilities of council and various stakeholders. The underpinning methodology employed for the study included document reviews, interviews, surveys and workshops. The final report also listed an appraisal of local attractions, the quality and adequacy of current accommodation levels, development opportunities and a ten-year marketing development projection.

5.2.22 Meander Valley Council Strategic Plan 2004-14

The Meander Valley Shire is located in Tasmania's central north and covers an area of 3,330 sq. km. The shire's regional economy based on mineral production, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and tourism has supported a population of 18,626 (ABS, 2011). The Meander Valley Strategic Plan has identified the community as the primary stakeholder in tourism's development, but also made reference to the State Government, the Local Tourism Authority, the Regional Tourism Association and local tourism business operatives.

Application of the TASEI to the Meander Valley Council Strategic Plan (2004) indicated sound council community cohesiveness with the document that noted extensive participation by residents during the plan's preparation (Table 5.22). This exhaustive process identified six future directions as priorities for the council's attention over the plan's ten-year life: natural and built environment, economic growth, community, health and wellbeing, togetherness, infrastructure and services.

Table 5.22:**Aggregated TASEI results for Meander Valley Strategic Plan 2004-2014**

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	5	0	3
Stakeholder influence	5	0	3
Perspectives regarding Tourism	4	1	3
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

The Meander Valley Strategic Plan identified administrative challenges presented by the conflicting imperatives of environmental sustainability and economic development. The plan noted the necessity of managing for sustainable outcomes that respected community values, were fair, balanced and long-term. Reference to a reporting instrument with which to manage the challenges identified was not in evidence, but of note were quarterly meetings convened by the Meander Valley Sustainable Environment Committee. The objective of these meetings were to ensure adequate progress in respect of environmental management with progress audited annually by community surveys.

The strategic plan identified the need to attract investment to ensure future economic wellbeing. To this end, tourism was singled out for developmental focus and was articulated in marketing and promotional terms, noting the need to increase visitor numbers, attract tourism groups and develop a Great Western Tiers brand. The plan acknowledged the need to work with tourism operators to identify new products with the prospect of increasing local employment levels.

5.2.23 Northern Midlands Council Strategic Plan 2007-17

The Northern Midlands Shire is located in Tasmania's central northeast and occupies an area of 5,136 sq. km. with Longford the shire's largest town serving as its administrative centre. The shire's economy based on manufacturing, retail, agriculture, transport and tourism has supported a population of 12,204 (ABS, 2011). The Northern Midlands Strategic Plan comprised two volumes with the second of these given over to documenting the outcome of community workshops.

Volume One of the study presented the core policy document and identified goals and objectives for its ten-year term. The plan noted that the council's capacity to function effectively was challenged by the shire's geographically scattered collection of small communities and diversity of needs. The plan also noted that this condition was compounded by significant and ongoing infra-structural demands coupled to limited financial resources.

Table 5.23:
Aggregated TASEI results for Northern Midlands Strategic Plan 2007-2017

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	5	1	2
Stakeholder influence	6	0	2
Perspectives regarding Tourism	5	0	3
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

The plan identified several stakeholders in respect of council's aspiration to grow tourism for its economic value. The community was acknowledged as the primary stakeholder, but also included were the State Government, the Local Tourism Authority, the Regional Tourism Organisation, Public Private Partnership arrangements and participation from local tourism business operatives.

Application of the TASEI returned generally positive counts suggesting proactive council community relationships and confirmed in the council's stated commitment to address community, environmental and social wellbeing (Table 5.23). This was also supported by the high word frequency count recorded for 'community' (Appendix B). Under the heading 'guiding principles' the strategic plan advocated particular attention be given to economic, environmental and social sustainability in the decision-making process. This issue received further attention in the plan under core functions of governance as '[p]roviding management of natural resources and environmental assets which promote social, economic and environmental sustainability' (Northern Midlands Council, 2007:13). No reference to a reporting instrument with which to implement and monitor these agendas was noted.

The plan identified the council's approach to tourism as essentially economic and a significant factor in growing the region's economy. Reference to a plan with which to strategise tourism's development was not in evidence, but a stand-alone document the *North Midlands Economic Profile* (North Midlands Business Association, 2009) singled out tourism for focused attention detailing its developmental relevance and regional economic potential.

5.2.24 Sorell Council Strategic Plan 2008-13

The Sorell Shire is located on Tasmania's southeast coast and occupies an area of 583 sq. km. The Shire's economy based primarily on stone and berry fruit, fishing, retail and tourism has supported a population of 11,443 (ABS, 2011). Increasing numbers of Sorell residents commute daily to Hobart City for employment. The strategic plan has identified nine key result areas for attention; services, financial performance, asset management, sustainable development, priority projects, climate change, community, partnerships and health. The plan identified council's commitment to report to those stakeholders listed on the published plan's opening pages in respect of objectives for long-term financial sustainability. Other than marginal comment regarding community participation in tourism's development further reference to stakeholders was not in evidence.

Table 5.24: Aggregated TASEI results for Sorell Strategic Plan 2008-2013

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	3	1	4
Stakeholder influence	1	1	6
Perspectives regarding Tourism	1	0	7
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	5	0	3

The document identified the Sorell council's approach to tourism as exclusively economic and forming part of a larger plan for the municipality. Further comment regarding Sorell's plans for tourism development were not available.

The Sorell Council Strategic Plan (2008) identified the need to reduce the impact of the built environment on both its natural environment and the community. However,

detail regarding management for sustainable outcomes was not included and use of the term ‘sustainable’ was limited to qualifying the council’s approach to financial and economic development. In respect of environmental issues the document addressed the issue of climate change and its impact on the municipality’s environmental capital. Comment was also included regarding Sorell’s social, environmental and economic criteria, but a reporting instrument with which to monitor and manage these aspirations was not in evidence.

5.2.25 Southern Midlands Council Strategic Plan 2012-17

The Southern Midlands municipality is located in the southeast of Tasmania and occupies an area of 2,615 sq. km. with an administrative centre located at Oatlands. The shire’s economy platformed on agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, manufacturing and tourism has supported a population of 5,731 (ABS, 2011). The strategic plan has identified the community as the primary tourism stakeholder with the Local Tourism Authority, Regional Tourism Organisation, State Government and contracted specialists also noted as participants in tourism’s development. The Southern Midlands Strategic Plan (2012) was based on six key points of focus; infrastructure, growth, landscapes, lifestyle, community and organisation. Identification of these themes has resulted from community consensus canvassed with regard to a shared vision for the municipality’s future development. The plan identified economic growth and community wellbeing as the council’s primary focus which then served to inform the various strategies employed in addressing the six key points of focus.

Table 5.25:
Aggregated TASEI results for Southern Midlands Strategic Plan 2012-2017

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	3	0	5
Stakeholder influence	4	2	2
Perspectives regarding Tourism	5	1	2
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	1	0	7

Application of the TASEI identified limited but specific use of the term ‘sustainable’ used in reference to organisational objectives and land use. Similarly, the plan offered

limited comment on environmental management with respect to land use and control. No reference was made to environmental or social sustainability.

The issue of tourism was articulated in marketing and promotional terms. Under a section in the document devoted to increasing tourism the plan identified the need to promote visitor spending through development of the region's heritage capital for commodification as tourism product. Relative to other Tasmanian municipalities the Southern Midlands geographic position has imposed limits in respect of tourism's potential. Specifically, the main Tasmanian highway carrying traffic from north to south has bypassed the shire's primary heritage site of Oatlands. To correct this Hobart consultants, Preferred Futures, were commissioned to produce the *Oatlands Integrated Development Strategy* (2008). This stand-alone document while not a tourism plan mapped a course for the region's economic development by utilising the shire's built heritage capital. The report's core strategy was to recommend inducing a scheduled stop for tourists resulting in annual forecasts projected out at 70,000 visitors and 5,000 overnight stays.

5.2.26 Tasman Council Strategic Plan 2011-16

Tasman is an island shire situated off Tasmania's southeast coast encompassing both the Tasman and Forester Peninsulas and occupying an area of 660 sq. km. The shire's administrative offices are located in the town of Nubeena and a predominantly agricultural economy including aquaculture, forestry and tourism have supported a population of approximately 2,223 (ABS, 2011). The Tasman Council Strategic Plan (2011) has presented six objectives; infrastructure, development, heritage, lifestyle, community and organisation. Collectively, these objectives resulted from extensive council/community participation in which the resulting consensus identified a vision for the shire's development.

Application of the TASEI (Table 5.26) identified growth in tourism and community wellbeing as the council's two primary objectives with the community nominated as the shire's primary stakeholder in tourism's development. Other stakeholders noted were the State Government, Local Tourism Authority, Regional Tourism Organisation, local tourism business operatives, Public Private Partnership arrangements and contracted consultants.

Table 5.26:
Aggregated TASEI results for Tasman Council Strategic Plan 2011-2016

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	7	0	1
Stakeholder influence	6	0	2
Perspectives regarding Tourism	7	0	1
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	1	1	6

The plan identified the Tasman council as community oriented with reference made to extensive community consultations as the basis for determining council priorities. This was supported by a high word frequency count for ‘community’ and also a positive count for seven of the eight TASEI indicators for the ‘Community Values’ theme (Table 5.26). The strategic plan flagged specific community priorities (CPs) that included tourism’s development. Reference to the issue of sustainability was general and unrelated to environmental management or tourism’s development. The potential risk to the municipality from sea level rises occasioned by climate change was rated by the community as being their lowest concern.

With respect to tourism, the high word frequency count recorded for ‘tourism/visitor’ in the strategic plan (Appendix B), suggested this was a significant consideration in the council’s aspiration to achieve economic growth. This was supported by community responses to the issue of tourism’s development. When asked to vote, almost three quarters of Tasman’s residents voted for more visitors to the island, increased yield and duration of stay. Also identified were greater council investments in tourism’s promotion and the establishment of a vibrant tourist association. The Strategic Plan identified *The Tasman Tourism Development Strategy 2011-2016* as the island’s guiding tourism planning document (Lebski, Saddler and Wadsley, 2011). The report was marketing oriented with the primary purpose of assessing the Tasman in terms of tourism product. In this the evaluation was couched in marketing terms projected visitor numbers and spend. The document made a solo reference to sustainable tourism development, but this was not qualified. Further reference to sustainability and indicators for monitoring tourism’s development and management were not present.

5.2.27 Waratah-Wynyard Council Strategic Plan 2009-14

The Waratah-Wynyard Shire is located in Tasmania's northwest and occupies an area of 3,531 sq. km. The shire's population of 13,350 (ABS, 2011) is administered from Wynyard a coastal town situated on the mouth of the Inglis River. The economy is based on dairy production, vegetables, horticulture, fishing, forestry, mining and tourism. A community consultation process has identified seven core values and subsequently these provided the framework for the latest strategic plan from council. In its opening address the council noted the need to respond to a volatile economic environment and fiscal constraints estimated to impact on future spending allocations. The Waratah-Wynyard Council Strategic Plan (2009) identified economic growth as a priority with tourism's development believed to hold significant potential in this regard. The plan identified the community as the primary stakeholder in tourism's development, but also noted were the Local Tourism Authority, the Regional Tourism Organisation, Public Private Partnership arrangements and contracted consultants.

The plan identified exhaustive community participation in the initial planning process and this was supported by a positive count recorded for seven of the eight TASEI indicators of 'Community Values' (Table 5.27). The plan confirmed the council's commitment to ongoing dialogue with its community in pursuit of a shared vision for the future.

Table 5.27:
Aggregated TASEI results for Waratah-Wynyard Strategic Plan 2009-2014

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	7	0	1
Stakeholder influence	5	0	3
Perspectives regarding Tourism	5	0	3
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

The Waratah-Wynyard Strategic plan reflected an awareness of the principle of sustainability and recorded the council as being resolved to achieve environmental sustainability as a legacy for future generations. Sustainable management practices were advocated for both built and natural environments. The term 'sustainable' was

also employed more generally to connote optimal conditions for tourism's growth. This was exemplified by 'sustainably developed as a key economic driver' (Waratah-Wynyard Council, 2009:9). No reference to a reporting instrument with which to monitor the sustainability of declared objectives and stated criteria was present.

Application of the TASEI identified economic issues as the primary focus for four of the council's key management objectives with tourism considered a central element in regional growth. The plan articulated tourism in marketing and promotional terms and identified specific local attractions for further development as tourism product. A stand-alone tourism plan, *The Waratah-Wynyard Council Tourism Plan 2011-2020* (Bolton, 2011) assessed the shire as tourism product in relation to its market as a precondition for increasing competitiveness as a tourist venue. The report identified key market segments in Tasmania and assessed Waratah-Wynyard's visitor history in terms of volume and overnight numbers. The report also included a summary of a tourism specific on-line survey intended to further inform the shire's tourism strategy. Among responses recorded was the view that too many groups were involved in tourism's promotion.

5.2.28 West Coast Council Strategic Plan 2010-15

The West Coast Shire occupies a land area of 9,589 sq. km. with a population of 4,998 (ABS, 2011) administered from Queenstown. The municipality's economy is supported by several mining operations, small business and tourism. The strategic plan has identified six key points of focus for council action; governance, corporate services, community services, regulatory services, infrastructure services and technical services. The West Coast Council Strategic Plan (2010) has noted that these key points result from a collaborative process between councillors and local government staff. There was no reference made identifying the community as a participant in the council's strategic planning deliberations. Stakeholders in the shire's tourism development were identified as the Local Tourism Authority, local tourism business operatives and Public Private Partnership arrangements.

Table 5.28: Aggregated TASEI results for West Coast Strategic Plan 2010-2015

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	2	0	6
Stakeholder influence	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Tourism	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

The plan referred to the concept of sustainability in two instances relating to future and long-term sustainability. Comment on the council's position with respect to social and environmental sustainability was not identified. However, a marginal reference in respect of the community's long-term viability pointed up the council's concern in respect of the future health of the shire's economy. The West Coast Strategic Plan identified the value of tourism to its economy with several objectives flagged for action. These were couched in marketing and promotional terms, but no reference to a plan or strategy for tourism's development was noted.

5.2.29 West Tamar Council Strategic Plan 2009-14

The West Tamar Shire is located in Tasmania's central north and occupies a land area of 691 sq. km. with a population of 21,266 (ABS, 2011). The shire's close geographic proximity to the City of Launceston has encouraged regular commuting between the two shires and increased residential density for the West Tamar municipality. The council has defined itself as socially, environmentally and economically accountable and listed five objectives as the basis of its strategic plan; community, economic and regional development, environment, infrastructure and organisation. These objectives resulted from exhaustive consultation with West Tamar's community in the form of a series of workshops. In respect to tourism the plan identified the community as pro-tourism and the primary stakeholder with reference also made to the role of the Local Tourism Authority.

The West Tamar Strategic Plan (2009) identified the council as community oriented committed to maintaining close partnerships with residents and resolved to address the latter's future aspirations for the municipality. The plan identified the importance of whole-of-community values and issues critical to resident's interests. Demographic

detail of the community was also included listing statistics for residents by age, origin, language, house ownership and income levels.

Table 5.29: TASEI results for West Tamar Strategic Plan 2009-2014

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Community values	3	1	4
Stakeholder influence	2	3	3
Perspectives regarding Tourism	3	0	5
Perspectives regarding Sustainability	4	0	4

Application of the TASEI indicated awareness of the concept of sustainability with council acknowledging it as a developmental precept. Reference was made to council assurances that the adopted planning scheme would adequately engage with related environmental issues. Further, the document advocated the promotion and encouragement of environmentally sustainable practices within the community with mention made of the council's intention to conduct an audit of community awareness of environmentally sustainable practices. No reference was made to a reporting instrument with which to monitor management of environmental sustainability. With respect to use of the term 'sustainable' fourteen instances were noted throughout the plan and when not used to define an environmental ideal were used more generally to express a wish to retain an already achieved objective.

The West Tamar Strategic Plan identified tourism as a component of economic development and the council's intention to maximise its perceived benefits. Reference to tourism was articulated in marketing and promotional terms with the Tamar Valley identified as a desirable tourist product. The plan acknowledged the concept of sustainable development, but an agenda for implementation in respect of tourism was not in evidence. Similarly, reference made to a tourism plan or strategy with which to progress tourism's development was not presented.

5.3 Commentary on the Content Analysis of Tasmania's Local Government Strategic Planning Documents.

The primary objective in applying a content analysis to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents, has been to examine perspectives regarding the presence of tourism and whether there is evidence that local management has proceeded in consideration of sustainable outcomes. The analysis identified a strong commitment among Tasmania's twenty-nine councils to prioritise the provision of economic growth with tourism sited as the favoured vehicle with which to achieve that objective. The exception (Flinders Island Council Strategic Plan 2011) occurred where tourism's economic promise while favoured was also considered to place environmental quality at risk from increased visitor traffic. The results have indicated that the pristine environment constituting Tasmania's topography is regarded by its councils primarily as a product for the growth of tourism.

Rational Choice Theory, when utilised to explore tourism related decisions reflected in the municipal council documents analysed, locates the conscription of local natural and historic features as tourism icons for economic advantage as the product of rational choices in response to the competitive economic environment. For virtually all documents analysed, identification of these icons as capital assets resulted from rational economically based choices in response to perspectives regarding the price of entry into competitive tourism markets. Their decision to do so has underpinned the prevalence of the perspective detected among municipalities that all such attractions are regarded as assets because of their potential to draw visitor numbers with subsequent benefits for local economies. To this end the features concerned were frequently alluded to in documents analysed in marketing and promotional terms and otherwise a sense of urgency was implied regarding increases in tourism for its economic contribution. This conclusion tends to be supported by the myriad of tourism stakeholders identified during the analysis that outnumber other sources of economic value included for each municipality.

The study failed to recover evidence that diffusion of the UNWTO edict regarding advocacy for sustainable tourism, had subsequently been communicated to Tasmania's local councils for consideration. In this respect, the current study concluded that the majority of municipalities while employing the term sustainability

liberally choose to do so in a generalised way to accent the status of a range of local issues. In this regard, the study's results suggested that information currently available to Tasmania's councils regarding the purpose and function of the concept of sustainability was limited in both scope and content. In consequence, the term's frequent use suggested it was perceived as a popular, but misunderstood concept. For the vast majority of councils, application of the term sustainability appeared expressive of a wish that the issue concerned should perpetuate regardless of whether economic or environmental. Thus, sustainable environment and sustainable economic growth were used interchangeably when addressing community aspirations, but without regard for the potentially conflictual relationship arising from the two issues. Except in the examples offered by Flinders Island and Launceston the term was seldom employed specifically to define strategies that ensured the perpetuation of social or environmental standards. In this regard, the documents subjected to analysis in phase one at the time of commencing this study suggested that rational choices emanating from council deliberations in Tasmania regarding tourism were unrelated to sustainable practices. Rather, the vast majority of council approaches to tourism excluded regard for environmental consequences were exclusively economic in orientation and betrayed no awareness of the UNWTO edict regarding sustainable tourism.

The disposition among Tasmanian councils to prioritise tourism for its economic promise has assumed parallels with the postulates defining the theory of rational choices (Scott, 2000). Rational Choice Theory (RCT) is used in the current study to explore the political and economic forces directing the maximisation of tourism in competitive neoliberal free-market environments. Parallels drawn between Tasmania's councils and the Australian Government have suggested that despite the differences in size and policy mandates and differences in the level of governmental sophistication involved, the intent to maximise tourism's economic value has remained common to both. The study has identified that while communication between the two tiers of government concerned have been marginal to non-existent the universality of the prevailing neoliberal free-market orthodoxy has established tourism's economic status as being of paramount importance to all governments. A postulate of RCT has assumed that with respect to this commonality, in current market trading environments the rationality required of government participation is

that their engagement with tourism would be premised on maximising advantage. This and the minimising of associated costs continue to be the necessary precepts guiding rational choices in response to tourism's markets.

The theory has posited that choices over economic issues and that include tourism, have been intrinsically rational because they are based on universal anthropocentric behavioural traits that seek to maximise advantage. In the case of perspectives identified in the current study these have been similarly premised on behavioural responses in which the continued economic wellbeing of communities has been assumed to be reliant on growth in tourism. In this regard, rational choices reflect the collective self-interest and form part of broader social theories dealing with the benefits and costs of exchange. A further assumption of RCT has been that rational choices and the exchanges they involve are bound to proceed regardless of the adequacy of available information on which they are premised. The action thus determined may therefore proceed on the basis of uncertainty and in the absence of sufficient understanding regarding consequences. Similarly, liberal employment of the term sustainability throughout the documents analysed has suggested that choices involved in response to the perceived benefits of tourism, while rational are premised on perspectives inherently constrained as exemplified by oversights regarding the potential for negative social and environmental consequences known to occur in the wake of excessive tourism.

5.4 Analysis of Aggregated Local Government Strategic Planning Documents using Individual TASEI Indicators

The objective in applying the third stage of the content analysis has been to further refine the research data by revisiting the thirty-two TASEI indicators as a collective. For this each indicator was considered as an aggregated response drawn from Tasmania's twenty-nine municipalities.

5.5 TASEI Theme A: Stakeholder Influence

Analysis of Tasmania's twenty-nine local government strategic planning documents has indicated the presence of a broad spectrum of stakeholder influences regarding tourism and that these vary depending on the council concerned. For example, several had commissioned tourism reports from specialists at different times and for different

purposes. More generally, the documents reflected variations in perspectives regarding their approaches to tourism, i.e., economic, environmental, cautionary, etc. (Appendix D). In other respects, the study identified a spectrum of stakeholder influences acting upon tourism and these extended to include residents, business interests, lobby groups, local or regional tourism associations, the National and State government. The widespread attention received from these parties tended to confirm the importance accorded tourism by all stakeholders involved. This, the first TASEI theme was intended to establish the type and form of stakeholder participation and the degree to which it has influenced the direction of tourism's development at the community destination level.

5.5.1 Indicator 01

Application of TASEI Indicator 01 (Table 5.30) to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents detected virtually no comment regarding visitor surveys or opinions gathered from tourists regarding their experiences as guests. At National and State levels, regular government funded surveys sample tourist opinion as the basis for gathering information regarding current market behaviour by which to determine marketing strategies (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2003). Other than one exception (King Island Visitor Survey, 2009) developmental decisions by Tasmania's local councils in respect of tourism appear to have proceeded without the benefit of visitor input. Given the already established economic relevance accorded local tourism by most Tasmanian municipalities, that local visitor surveys were not conducted would also suggest the absence of an information framework on which to plan tourism's local advancement.

Table 5.30: Indicator 01

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'Visitor opinion influenced tourism's local development'	1	0	28

5.5.2 Indicator 02

TASEI Indicator 02 (Table 5.31) identified that fifty-five percent of Tasmania's local councils consider their communities to be stakeholders in local tourism activity and a source of influence over subsequent developmental decisions. While such community consultations and participations were not guarantors of subsequent influence on

strategic directions, this count has again confirmed the presence of a cohesive quality among Tasmania's local communities. For the majority inclusion in the consultation process appears to have gone some way to satisfying community aspirations regarding progress and of realising tourism's promise of economic benefits.

Table 5.31: Indicator 02

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'Local community consultation influenced the tourism development process'	14	2	13

5.5.3 Indicator 03

Application of TASEI Indicator 03 (Table 5.32) indicated that thirty-one percent of municipalities have either contracted with or elected to partner with their Local Tourism Authority in pursuit of developing local tourism. While the source of this data is not conclusive the low count has suggested that for the majority of local councils input from Local Tourism Authorities as experts on tourism's local development were considered to be of limited use.

Table 5.32: Indicator 03

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies Local Tourism Authority (LTA) participation'	9	0	20

5.5.4 Indicator 04

Application of TASEI Indicator 04 (Table 5.33) to Tasmania's local council strategic plans identified that approximately half of councils have conferred with or accommodated the interests of local business operatives in respect of tourism's development. This issue has been dealt with further in subsequent indicators, but at approximately half the count has suggested that Tasmania's local councils favour relationships involving input from private operators for the economic efficiencies believed to result. More generally, the trend accords with a growing preference seen among local government to partner with expertise available from business for the competitive advantages that follow.

Table 5.33: Indicator 04

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies consultation with local tourism business operatives'	12	2	15

5.5.5 Indicator 05

Application of TASEI Indicator 05 (Table 5.34) to local council strategic planning documents indicated that approximately half of Tasmania's local councils chose to align themselves with the State Government's tourism development policies. While this result has implied a State/local nexus in respect of tourism's local development, as Tourism Tasmania is the primary generator of tourism demand, the absence of comment from the remaining half of councils raises questions over the adequacy of such arrangements. Elsewhere in the research, related questions have suggested that the State/local nexus regarding cooperation over tourism would benefit from revisiting the way in which Tourism Tasmania as the State's tourism commission has elected to progress tourism's development at local levels.

Table 5.34: Indicator 05

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies State government influence on local tourism development'	13	2	14

5.5.6 Indicator 06

Application of TASEI Indicator 06 (Table 5.35) revealed that approximately one third of Tasmania's local councils have elected to commission tourism consultancy services in respect of strategic planning. Already noted earlier in this chapter several but unrelated reports concerned with aspects of tourism development had been commissioned by different councils, at different times and for different purposes (Appendix D). The purpose of these documents had ranged from the pursuit of economic development to one instance where tourism's development was deemed contingent on environmental management. The reports involved have suggested that approximately half of Tasmania's local councils acknowledge tourism's local potential as a worthy focus for investment. However, the majority of reports

commissioned were marketing strategies promoting local tourism icons but did not deliver a strategic plan for tourism's management or its sustainable development.

Table 5.35: Indicator 06

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'Contracted specialists contributed to the tourism development process'	13	1	15

5.5.7 Indicator 07

Application of TASEI Indicator 07 (Table 5.36) to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents identified that twenty percent of councils acknowledge the influence of Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO) as stakeholders in municipal deliberations regarding tourism's development. The low status accorded RTOs has been the subject of further analysis in phase two of this research. Tasmania's Regional Tourism Organisations have been the subject of frequent intra-industry structural changes spanning nearly two decades (KPMG, 2010) the collective impact of this may have raised issues of continuing credibility and accounted for the low count recorded.

Table 5.36: Indicator 07

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The relevant Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) influenced the development process'	5	1	23

5.5.8 Indicator 08

Application of TASEI Indicator 08 (Table 5.37),\ to local council strategic planning documents indicated that at approximately eighty percent the majority have acknowledged some form of agreement or relationship with corporate interests falling under the general heading of Public Private Partnerships (PPP). However, the trend by local councils to partner with others may be more lateral including arrangements with corporations termed PPPs but also neighbouring shires, but in all instances such collaboration towards tourism was assumed to favour both parties. Particularly, given the competitive environment characterising tourism markets partnership arrangements

would hold the potential for improved economic returns, but would also contribute to the knowledge base on which market advantage can be founded.

Table 5.37: Indicator 08

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document indicates the presence of Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements'	18	5	6

5.5.9 Summary: TASEI Theme A: Stakeholder Influence (Tourism)

Analysis of the eight indicators for Theme A, 'Stakeholder Influence' suggest that whether through State government, corporate interests, consultants or public/private agreements influence involving one or more stakeholders have typified local council approaches to tourism. However, while all documents analysed have offered evidence of active participation in this regard the overall range of influences from stakeholders in that process appears to have been random and uncoordinated. Of interest, influence from Local Tourism Authorities (LTAs) and Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) given their official mandate to focus on tourism's growth have been marginal. Moreover, the Tasmanian Tourism Commission (Tourism Tasmania) as the primary stakeholder had failed to attract a count of more than fifty per cent. The assumption that Tourism Tasmania is the State's foremost tourism expert and therefore a preeminent source of influence has prompted questions regarding the calibre of State/local communications.

In contrast, at eighty per cent the majority of councils have shown a preference for Public Private Partnerships, a count that has included cross-border arrangements with neighbouring municipalities. With one exception, there has been no evidence to indicate that tourism's local development has proceeded with the benefit of input from visitor surveys. Analysis of data from this theme has indicated a general propensity on the part of local councils to proceed independent of input from regional and State tourism authorities and may suggest the presence of communications issues. The count has indicated that perspectives regarding local tourism among local

councils have been of listening to their respective communities as the primary stakeholders.

5.6 TASEI Theme B: Perspectives Regarding Tourism

For Theme B, the TASEI instrument was applied to determine factors contributing to Tasmanian local council perspectives regarding tourism. For the majority of councils, perspectives regarding tourism were that it was considered exclusively as a potential source of economic benefit for their communities. However, significant degrees of variation were found in the way such aspirations were planned and strategised across the twenty-nine local councils concerned. These variations were in part attributable to dissimilarities in economic strengths occurring from shire to shire. For example, while most municipalities welcomed the economic benefits accompanying tourism some professed an overt reliance on seasonal traffic while for others agricultural production obviated such dependence. There follows an analysis of the eight indicators dealing with perspectives of tourism among Tasmania's twenty-nine local councils.

5.6.1 Indicator 9

Application of TASEI Indicator 09 (Table 5.38) to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents identified that nearly seventy percent of municipalities articulated a strategy for tourism's development. While the operational feasibility of these strategies could not be confirmed the count did indicate that the majority of Tasmania's councils had aspired to grow share in the State's tourism market activity. The count also confirmed that for the majority of councils perspectives towards tourism were exclusively economic.

Table 5.38: Indicator 09

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document articulates a strategy for tourism's economic development'	17	3	9

5.6.2 Indicator 10

Application of TASEI Indicator 10 (Table 5.39) recorded that six percent of local councils elected to proceed with tourism's development based on sustainable

principles. The implications of this low count have indicated that for the vast majority of Tasmanian local councils, awareness of links between the development of tourism and the potential social and environmental risks associated with planning that is unsustainable have yet to manifest. The count also indicated that the fundamental principle inherent in sustainability while employed liberally in the documents analysed was not understood with respect to its practical applications. No relationship could be detected linking management of local tourism with that of sustainable principles.

Table 5.39: Indicator 10

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document articulates a strategy for tourism's sustainable development'	2	0	27

5.6.3 Indicator 11

Application of TASEI Indicator 11 (Table 5.40) to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents identified that eighty-three percent of communities were in favor of tourism's development. This high count confirmed earlier counts and identified a strong pro-tourism platform among Tasmania's communities. A clear majority of Tasmanian local councils appear to favour the development of tourism although in the vast majority of instances no strategy was in evidence by which to proceed. This fact was further evidenced by a propensity on the part of approximately one third of councils to commission marketing reports over more holistic approaches to the management of tourism's local product and that included monitoring for sustainable outcomes and long-term objectives.

Table 5.40: Indicator 11

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'Document declares a preference for tourism's development'	24	0	5

5.6.4 Indicator 12

Application of TASEI Indicator 12 (Table 5.41) to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents recorded that fifty-eight percent of councils have identified their shire's physical attributes as economic assets. The majority of documents have identified both natural and built assets as tourism product and rating both

topographical features and scenic attractions as economic resources for their touristic value. The majority of councils in electing to identify physical features as economic assets over concern to proceed with regard to the sustainability of those assets tend confirm the urgency bestowed by council on tourism as a source of economic growth.

Table 5.41: Indicator 12

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies the destination's physical resources as economic assets'	12	5	12

5.6.5 Indicator 13

TASEI Indicator 13 (Table 5.42) recorded that twenty percent of local councils have viewed the development of tourism as a potential source of employment. The widespread economic differences noted earlier across Tasmania's twenty-nine municipalities may have accounted for factors that limit employment opportunities at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum. For the councils concerned increased tourism was assumed to result in an increased demand for labour. However, the reality has been that tourism is seasonal, sporadic and increases in demand for labour mostly casual and unpredictable. The count however, has underpinned the degree to which reliance is placed on the presence of tourism by some municipalities.

Table 5.42: Indicator 13

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies the employment value of tourism development'	5	1	23

5.6.6 Indicator 14

Application of TASEI Indicator 14 (Table 5.43) recorded that twenty-eight percent of local councils considered tourism in terms of visitor numbers, spend and duration of stay as a direct consequence of the presence of tourists. The count although only representing a quarter of municipalities, has confirmed the exclusivity of an economic perspective taken by councils regarding tourism as the panacea for local growth. Of interest, with one exception (Central Coast Council Strategic Plan, 2009-2014) no

reference could be found regarding concern over the adequacy of locally available infrastructure, plant and services with which to accommodate the anticipated increases in visitor volume.

Table 5.43: Indicator 14

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies visitor numbers, spend and duration of stay'	7	1	21

5.6.7 Indicator 15

Application of TASEI Indicator 15 (Table 5.44) to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents recorded that seventy-six percent of local governments chose to articulate their engagement with tourism in marketing and promotional terms. The count at over three-quarters confirmed that the prevailing perspectives towards local tourism were exclusively economic. The absence of descriptors to indicate a balanced approach to tourism in which marketing has been but the last in a sequence of preparatory actions has suggested that for the majority of local councils the general perspective of tourism was of local experiences for sale, and in which the need for strategies or plans did not arise.

Table 5.44: Indicator 15

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document articulates tourism's local development in marketing and promotional terms'	21	1	7

5.6.8 Indicator 16

Application of TASEI Indicator 16 (Table 5.45) to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents recorded that forty-two percent of municipalities had commissioned specific stand-alone reports from consultants as plans or strategies intended to pursue tourism's development (Appendix D). Of this count ninety percent were marketing documents as distinct from more holistic approaches that included regard for environmental management. The commissioning of stand-alone reports from experts constituted a significant financial outlay for the municipalities concerned. As twelve municipalities had chosen to do so has testified to the

importance bestowed on tourism's development. However, as noted earlier the vast majority of the documents analysed were marketing reports that offered strategies for the promotion of local attractions. The analysis surfaced little evidence that the specialist reports concerned had led to significant improvements in tourism volume for the municipalities concerned.

Table 5.45: Indicator 16

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'A stand-alone document details a plan or strategy for local tourism'	12	0	17

5.6.9 Summary: TASEI Theme B: Perspectives Regarding Tourism

Theme B 'Perspectives regarding Tourism' sought to determine Tasmanian local council perspectives regarding the presence of tourism. Although the Local Government Act of Tasmania 1993 had required all councils to produce and publish a strategic plan there has been no requirement that tourism be included. Nevertheless, the analysis indicated that prevailing perspectives among the majority of local councils were that significant importance was bestowed on the growth of local tourism. Moreover, community support for tourism's development was predominantly economic and supported by documents identifying local topographical and historical features as touristic assets in the service of the local economy. However, while the majority of documents analysed shared this position no reference was found that identified an effective operational strategy with which tourism's economic promise could be realised. This has appeared to be the case for the majority of councils where conversation regarding the growth of local tourism was limited to the rhetoric of marketing and promotions.

One fifth of Tasmania's local councils have declared in favour of tourism's development as a potential source of employment, but with one exception noted earlier reference regarding the adequacy of current infrastructural capacity and plant as the necessary preconditions for accommodating tourism's growth, were not available. More generally the analysis indicated that only two of Tasmania's twenty-nine councils were alert to the value of progressing tourism's development for

sustainable outcomes (Central Coast Council Strategic Plan 2009-2014; Flinders Island Strategic Plan 2011) Collectively, the analysis for Theme B has indicated that while the majority of Tasmania's local councils court tourism for sound economic reasons, strategies by which to effectively advance that end had yet to evolve.

5.7 TASEI Theme C: Perspectives Regarding Sustainability

The current study sought to detect perspectives from among Tasmania's Local Council Strategic Planning documents towards the issue of sustainable practice, the extent to which it was understood, implemented, and whether it was purposefully integrated into the management of local tourism. The concept of sustainability has already been cited by the Tasmanian Government as the path of choice for the State's development (Government of Tasmania, 2014b). More broadly the principle of managing for sustainable outcomes has been increasingly acknowledged as the reporting standard for corporations, organisations and governments globally ((GRI, 2012). It has also been advocated by the UNWTO as the most appropriate response to counter the adverse effects of tourism's externalities, but that to have effect this would have to be implemented at local tourism destinations. The favoured instrument with which to achieve this was Triple Bottom Line (TBL) reporting. Application of TBL monitors not just the economic result of tourism but also its social and environmental footprint (Hubbard, 2009; Williams, Wilmshurst and Clift, 2011; Williams, 2012). The TBL reporting standard is site specific and particularly useful where tourism's social and environmental consequences cannot be readily assessed. To have effect, TBL is employed in practical applications that allow management to ensure sustainable outcomes. The results for Theme C in the current study have been concerned to identify local perspectives from among Tasmania's twenty-nine local councils regarding the concept of sustainability, the degree to which it has been understood, awareness levels of its relevance to tourism and whether TBL was applied to achieve sustainable outcomes.

5.7.1 Indicator 17

Application of TASEI Indicator 17 (Table 5.46) to local council strategic planning documents identified that sixty-five percent of Tasmanian councils have acknowledged the relevance of sustainability as a consideration when planning and had displayed an awareness of integrating the principle into management strategies.

For the majority of local councils, awareness of the principle of managing for sustainability was understood to mean the option of integrating the concept into municipal planning, but that this was not always pursued.

Table 5.46: Indicator 17

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document reflects an awareness of the concept of sustainability'	15	4	10

5.7.2 Indicator 18

Application of TASEI Indicator 18 (Table 5.47) recorded that sixty-nine percent of Tasmanian local councils have identified sustainability as a precept for development. However, the positive regard suggested by this high count may not automatically have translated into a practical application of sustainability. Frequent use of the term in reports analysed were with one exception not supported by reference identifying its operationalisation.

Table 5.47: Indicator 18

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies sustainability as a precept for development'	20	2	7

5.7.3 Indicator 19

Application of TASEI Indicator 19 (Table 5.48) to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents at less than fourteen per cent indicated only marginal interest among councils regarding the practical application of a monitoring and reporting standard by which sustainable outcomes could be ensured. The count confirmed that while several councils acknowledged in principle the worth of sustainability, in practice the majority had assumed considerable license regarding its application. Little rigor was in evidence and approaches to the issue appeared ad hoc.

Table 5.48: Indicator 19

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies the value of reporting for sustainability'	3	1	25

5.7.4 Indicator 20

Application of TASEI Indicator 20 (Table 5.49) to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents indicated that the vast majority of councils have aligned with the principle that their environment should be protected. In some instances where responsibilities included the management of river systems and coastal areas, these were said to be monitored regularly to ensure environmental quality. At ninety-six percent while the high level of awareness may in part have been reflective of State Government environmental directives it has also suggested significant local council concern regarding environmental quality.

Table 5.49: Indicator 20

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document includes goals related to environmental protection'	24	4	1

5.7.5 Indicator 21

Application of TASEI Indicator 21 (Table 5.50) has recorded a one hundred percent count for local council commitments to social cohesion and the wellbeing of their communities. This count was confirmed later under findings for Theme D (Community) and has supported other data in respect of the cohesive or 'close-knit' characteristics identified with Tasmanian communities. The count has identified that local councils attach significant importance to the achievement of social sustainability among the State's local communities.

Table 5.50: Indicator 21

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies goals related to social cohesion and wellbeing'	29	0	0

5.7.6 Indicator 22

Application of TASEI Indicator 22 (Table 5.51) had recorded a marginal count of seven percent for those local councils that recognised and acknowledged tourism's environmental impact. The low return for this count gave rise to an anomaly in which high levels of community cohesion, sense-of-place and regard for environmental quality appeared to contrast with marginal concern afforded tourism's potential to impact negatively on that environment. The potential for conflict has suggested that local council perspectives that might otherwise have seen environmental sustainability and advocacy for tourism's economic development as conflictual, have continued in the absence of an informed response to both.

Table 5.51: Indicator 22

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document acknowledges and quantifies tourism's environmental impact'	1	1	27

5.7.7 Indicator 23

Application of TASEI Indicator 23 (Table 5.52) identified a marginal count of three percent for Tasmanian local councils who expressed a preference that tourism's development should progress sustainably. This result, in common with the preceding indicator (22) has confirmed the probability that for a large majority of Tasmanian local councils, advocacy in support of economic development through tourism has proceeded without regard for the quality of the environment on which tourism is reliant. The findings have suggested that both tourism and the uses of sustainable practice with which long-term social and environmental quality can be ensured have continued to be poorly understood by the local councils involved.

Table 5.52: Indicator 23

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies a preference for tourism development that is sustainable'	1	0	28

5.7.8 Indicator 24

Application of TASEI Indicator 24 (Table 5.53) confirmed the findings of earlier indicators that at ninety-seven percent of Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents, although frequently having applied the term sustainability to satisfy a variety of community aspirations, has overlooked its suitability for implementing the principle of sustainable tourism.

Table 5.53: Indicator 24

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies a strategy for implementing sustainable tourism principles'	1	0	28

5.7.9 Summary: TASEI Theme C: Perspectives Regarding Sustainability

Theme C 'Perspectives regarding Sustainability' sought to determine how Tasmanian municipalities have perceived the issue of sustainability, its management and more specifically its relationship to tourism. The majority of Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents identified the concept of sustainability and a marginally greater number declared for its inclusion as a precept for local development. However, these were in contrast to a marginal count of fourteen per cent recording the value of reporting to ensure sustainability. Perspectives evident among Tasmania's local councils regarding environmental protection and a declared awareness regarding the concept of sustainability were found not to include the effects of tourism as a consideration. While economic benefits may have accrued to Tasmania's local communities from growing tourism, the relevance of a more sustainable form that could ensure long-term benefits appear to have been overlooked by councils and this perhaps due to budgetary constraints that have resulted in a shorter-term perspective. Thus, concern on the part of local councils to ensure community wellness, have possibly been put at risk through local choices based on the limited availability of funds, but also limited information. Awareness on the part of councils regarding the implementation of monitoring and reporting instruments able to ensure social and environmental sustainability, were not in evidence during the analysis implying that the negative effects associated with tourism's externalities were not understood.

5.8 TASEI Theme D: Community

A significant factor determining the degree to which tourism succeeds in destinations are resident responses to the presence of tourists (Doxy, 1976; Tourism Research Australia, 2009; Vargas-Sanchez, Porrus-Bueno, and Plaza-Mejia, 2011). The content analysis identified that communities represented by Tasmania's local councils regarded both the presence of tourists and the local environment as important issues. Tourism, due to its economic contribution and the local environment because of its significance in respect of the community's sense-of-place. This study engaged with twenty-nine Tasmanian local council documents each broadly representative of their community's values and aspirations. Theme D Community Values presented an aggregation of perspectives regarding the relationship between Tasmanian communities and tourism.

5.8.1 Indicator 25

Applied to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents TASEI Indicator 25 (Table 5.54) had identified a one hundred percent commitment on the part of councils to acknowledge and deliver on whole-of-community values. In the majority of cases these values were identified as issues arising from direct community input and often canvassed through participation in workshops with the balance defined by councils acting as proxy for their community's interests. At one hundred per cent the count suggested that Tasmanian local councils have responsive to the aspirations of their communities.

Table 5.54: Indicator 25

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies whole-of-community values'	29	0	0

5.8.2 Indicator 26

Application of TASEI Indicator 26 (Table 5.55) has identified eighty-three percent of local councils as choosing to pro-actively report on the overall quality of life experienced by their community. For this majority, a spectrum of approaches regarding what constituted 'quality of life' had varied depending on the municipality concerned and ranged from 'living with idyllic scenery' through to 'benefits derived from the local economy'. All views expressed were in reference to aspects associated

with residency such as ‘a sense of community’ and ‘sense-of-place’ and indicated that for the majority of communities in Tasmania quality of life was important and regarded positively.

Table 5.55: Indicator 26

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
‘The document assesses the destination’s overall quality of life’	23	1	5

5.8.3 Indicator 27

Applied to Tasmania’s local council strategic planning documents the TASEI Indicator 27 (Table 5.56) identified a one hundred percent commitment to identify and deliver on issues considered as be critical to resident’s interests. The results for this indicator suggested that councils were generally cognisant of and pursued mandates that reflected the wishes expressed by their communities. The majority of local councils acknowledged that consensus achieved through community forums subsequently determined council objectives.

Table 5.56: Indicator 27

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
‘The document identifies issues critical to resident’s interests’	29	0	0

5.8.4 Indicator 28

Applied to Tasmania’s local council strategic planning documents the TASEI Indicator 28 (Table 5.57) detected that just short of half of local councils chose to include comment regarding their shire’s demographics and population statistics. Population size and disbursement vary considerably among Tasmania’s twenty-nine shires and have provided one of several indicators for economic health. Demographics have therefore constituted an important factor in some council deliberations as they have related to the supply of services and budgetary constraints determined by the shire’s rates base. In respect of community aspirations to grow tourism, such limitations have been a deciding factor in determining the municipality’s financial reach.

Table 5.57: Indicator 28

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies demographics and population levels'	11	4	14

5.8.5 Indicator 29

Application of TASEI Indicator 29 (Table 5.58) to local council strategic planning documents had detected that approximately half of Tasmania's councils chose to identify economic activity. This was found to be from one or several sources depending on the shire concerned and could include agriculture, mining, port services and tourism. In common with the previous indicator, the variation in the count reflected differences in population size, disbursement and land use. At least half of Tasmania's local councils had perceived economic viability as the source of community wellbeing and of sufficient importance for inclusion in the documents analysed.

Table 5.58: Indicator 29

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies major local economic activities'	14	1	14

5.8.6 Indicator 30

Applied to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents TASEI Indicator 30 (Table 5.59) identified that over sixty-five percent had elected to include a description or otherwise comment on local natural or built attractions. While this can be considered as expressive of the local community's sense-of-place the strong count recorded for economic growth infers that this is more likely to have signified the touristic value of the attractions identified. Tasmania's twenty-nine local councils have tended to be competitive regarding growth of market share, particularly where alternatives capable of subsidising tourism's economic contribution were not available.

Table 5.59: Indicator 30

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document draws attention to the locality's principal attractions'	15	4	10

5.8.7 Indicator 31

Applied to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents TASEI Indicator 31 (Table 5.60) has identified that ten percent of councils chose to include comment regarding their local climate. The low count has suggested that local weather conditions were not perceived by councils as a determinant of tourist numbers but intended for the benefit of those communities with greater reliance on seasonal climatic conditions and their impact on agricultural yields.

Table 5.60: Indicator 31

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies the primary characteristics of the local climate'	2	1	26

5.8.8 Indicator 32

In contrast to the previous indicator (31) TASEI Indicator 32 (Table 5.61) when applied to Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents had recorded that sixty-two percent of councils were aware of the issue of climate change. The State economy's greater reliance on tourism relative to other Australian States has suggested that the potential for damage to the economy resulting from climate extremes has warranted increased attention. Eighteen councils noted that the issue was a consideration in their planning processes. The majority count suggested the presence of significant concern among the majority of councils Tasmania regarding the issue. However, analysis of council documents could detect no evidence that the issue was regarded as posing a potential risk to the continued economic contribution made by tourism.

Table 5.61: Indicator 32

	<i>Evident</i>	<i>Tenuous</i>	<i>Absent</i>
'The document identifies awareness regarding climate change'	12	6	11

5.8.9 Summary: TASEI Theme D Community

Analysis of the eight indicators comprising Theme D 'Community Values' had identified aspects of relationships between Tasmania's local councils and their communities. The degree of reciprocity displayed by which elected councils

undertook to pursue resident's interests was found to be a contributing factor to social cohesiveness and 'sense-of-place' (Wenger, 1998; Adams, 2009). The high counts recorded for the categories 'Issues Critical to Residents Interests', 'Whole of Community Values' and 'Overall quality of life' suggested that the majority of Tasmania's twenty-nine councils and their communities could be characterised as 'close-knit' cohesive relationships indicative of sound council/community relations (Tinsley and Lynch, 2008; King Island Council, 2012). The analysis has indicated that the majority of councils perceive local topographical features and historic icons as tourism assets. Several have acknowledged concern regarding the effects of climate change but none have expressed awareness regarding its potential to disrupt the increasing tourism volume on which local economies have been either fully or partly reliant. Expressions of pride and significant regard for the community's sense-of-place were evident from the majority of council documents analysed. However, the wish identified among most councils to commodify their sense-of-place together with its attendant topographical attractions for the economic benefits believed to result from increased tourism has suggested little regard for the long-term value of sustainable principles. In this regard analysis of the documents has indicated only marginal awareness among local councils regarding the long-term socio-cultural and environmental impacts of increasing tourism.

The presence of a 'sense-of-place' (Wenger, 1998; Adams, 2009, Tasmanian Government, 2013) or 'Close-knit' characteristics among Tasmanian communities identified by the analysis have aligned with traits identified in social theories dealing with human exchanges (Burns, 1972; Emerson, 1976). These have suggested that behavioural responses regarding interactions within communities are frequently patterned on reciprocity. In these, rational choices have extended beyond exclusively economic considerations frequently characterising transactions involving policy agendas at National and State Government levels. In contrast, local transactions may be characterised by behaviour that ensures the continuance of relationships and social cohesion (Burns, 1972). It is now generally accepted among tourism scholars that a predisposition to engage the concept of sustainable tourism may be contingent on such whole of community participation and regard for sense-of-place (Simpson, 2001:

Reid, Mair and George, 2004; Andereck, Valentine, Knopf and Vogt, 2005; Shen, Hughey and Simmons, 2008).

5.9 Commentary on Results of Application of Individual TASEI Indicators

For the third pass of the content analysis for phase one of the research, the thirty-two indicators of the Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI), were revisited collectively. These served to further refine insights regarding specific perspectives identified earlier in the content analysis of Tasmanian local council strategic planning documents. In general terms indicators suggested significant commitment by Tasmania's local councils to advance social cohesion among their respective communities. The nature of the rational choices involved indicated general concern on the part of councils to ensure the economic viability of their community's sense-of-place through the promise offered by attracting tourism's development.

While all councils identified influences from a range of stakeholders in regard to tourism, only half of documents analysed acknowledged participation by Tourism Tasmania despite its role as the State's leading tourism authority. The majority of councils acknowledged the relevance of sustainability as a developmental precept but this was unsubstantiated and did not extend to acknowledgement of tourism as a suitable focus for achieving sustainable outcomes. More generally, sustainable practices while given ready acknowledgement by local councils, were unsupported by evidence of monitoring and reporting procedures with which to ensure the achievement of sustainable objectives.

5.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the content analysis of Tasmania's twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents and concluding the first of the two-part research design intended to address the research question – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* To achieve this the analysis utilised four related themes of stakeholder influence, perspectives regarding tourism, perspectives regarding sustainability and community values. These themes were applied as the Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI). The purpose of the

instrument was to identify those local council perspectives subsequently addressed in the twenty-nine council documents analysed regarding tourism and its relevant stakeholders, awareness regarding sustainability and the part played by local communities. This last issue assumed added significance due to the UNWTO's global initiative regarding advocacy for the implementation of sustainable tourism practices at the community destination level where tourism manifests in real terms.

The analysis of data resulting from phase one concluded that Tasmanian councils have perceived the promotion of community cohesiveness as important with most identifying economic, social and environmental factors as central to the continuance of their community's lifestyles. In this regard, the majority of Tasmania's twenty-nine councils perceived economic growth as the dominant factor responsible for ensuring continued community cohesiveness and with tourism's growth singled out as the principle vehicle for its attainment. However, for the vast majority of local councils community aspirations regarding increases in tourism have appeared unsupported by strategies, plans or expertise sufficient for its practical achievement. This was confirmed by the virtual absence of references made to tourism planning strategies other than marketing reports commissioned from external sources (Appendix D). In a significant number of cases the deficit noted in guidance regarding tourism's local development appeared exacerbated by less than optimal communication from National and State Government tourism commissions as experts. The documents identified several other stakeholders as acting to influence tourism's developmental direction, but these were for the most part random and uncoordinated.

In respect of the local council perspectives identified for phase one of the study Rational Choice Theory (RCT) was utilised as a suitable lens with which to explore their economic significance. The broad-based support bordering on consensus identified among Tasmanian councils in respect of tourism's economic potential suggested the predominance of short-termism in which the immediacy of results had overlooked the attending impacts. This characteristic has parallels with market-led responses to economic growth in competitive tourism markets. The overarching disposition to pursue profit maximisation exclusive of other considerations is a core postulate of RCT in which economic accomplishment has been identified as synonymous with the securing of market advantage. The widespread perspective

identified in the documents analysed regarding tourism's economic promise betrayed little concern for the consequences from such increases and the potential for tourism to generate long-term adverse social and environmental impacts. The analysis was able to identify this characteristic in respect of acknowledgements by the majority of Tasmanian councils towards the perceived value of tourism while marginalising the principle of sustainability. While significant municipal support was recorded for development that could proceed sustainably parallel support for the development of tourism as an economic wellspring was notable for having avoided all association with sustainable practice. In this regard, while the majority of councils had declared for environmental sustainability there was no evidence that this proceeded in tandem with monitoring and reporting instruments that could ensure its achievement. The analysis concluded that the importance accorded sustainability and environmental protection by Tasmania's local councils, while widespread was largely rhetorical and conflicted with advocacy favouring increased growth in tourism. The analysis also found that paradoxically disregard for the sustainable management of the local environment had put at risk the integrity of the environmental and cultural attractions on which tourism's growth has continued to be dependent.

Chapter Six

Review of Tasmanian Local Government Participant Perspectives

6.0 Introduction

Chapter six presents phase two of the research in which thirty-eight local government management employees have been interviewed in the context of Tasmania. Each interview has proceeded with the objective of identifying perspectives among participants regarding tourism stakeholders, tourism, sustainability and community responses. It was intended that the primary data resulting from interviews add rigour to the current study and in consequence they are aligned with the four research themes developed for phase one.

Following on from phase one the data resulting from phase two was intended to enhance the validity of the study in preparation for addressing the research question – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* Responses drawn from interviews were grouped into categories as sixteen topics for analysis. The major portion of transcriptions resulting from interviews have been located at the rear of this document as appendices I to L inclusive.

6.1 Theme A: Perspectives Regarding Stakeholder Influence on Tourism

Theme A comprised six topics (Table 6.0) that concerned participant perspectives regarding stakeholder influences on tourism's local development. The first three topics grouped perspectives regarding National and State government. The fourth dealt with leadership in respect of tourism in the State of Tasmania. The fifth considered inter-industry communications and lastly the degree to which Tasmania's municipalities had entered into collaborative arrangements with other parties towards tourism's growth. The full transcript of perspectives obtained from interview participants for Theme A, have been provided in Appendix I.

Table 6.0 Theme A: Topics Concerning Tourism Stakeholder Influence

<i>First topic:</i>	<i>Dialogue with National Government regarding tourism</i>
<i>Second topic:</i>	<i>Dialogue with State Government regarding tourism</i>
<i>Third topic:</i>	<i>Issues arising from State Govt. influence on local tourism</i>
<i>Fourth topic:</i>	<i>Issues regarding leadership in Tasmania's tourism sector</i>
<i>Fifth topic:</i>	<i>Issues concerning communication in tourism</i>
<i>Sixth topic:</i>	<i>Partnership arrangements as a developmental contribution to local tourism</i>

6.1.1 First Topic: Dialogue with National Government Regarding Tourism

The first topic sought participant perspectives regarding the influence of National Government on tourism's local development in Tasmania. The issue was particularly germane to the current study due to the Australian Government's membership of the UNWTO and therefore had been a party to that organisation's initiative advocating the implementation of sustainable tourism practices at the local destination level. Two isolated instances were recounted involving collaboration between Tasmanian municipalities and the National Government. However, while positive, these pointed to contact as the exception and that for the majority of municipalities dialogue with the National Government did not occur.

'One of the biggest gaps that I've seen from the national perspective, would probably be the lack of communication and co-ordination, it's a little bit disheartening' (D1/B).

For the vast majority, perspectives of the National Government were of a remote entity not given to frequent communication with local government.

'I've never seen anything from the National Government' (W1/A).

Participant responses volunteered the scarcity of cooperation regarding tourism, but also offered that the low incidence of contact applied more generally. With regard to UNWTO advocacy no participant interviewed could recount communication from the

Australian Government regarding the management of tourism for sustainable outcomes.

6.1.2 Second Topic: Dialogue with State Government Regarding Tourism

The second topic sought participant perspectives regarding communication with Tasmania's State Government (Tourism Tasmania) and concerning tourism's local development. The analysis identified that Tourism Tasmania's contact with the State's twenty-nine municipalities was not uniform, but favoured particular shires over others.

'So, it gets very political, the regional bodies appear to get a bigger share of voice in the market spend, and they push the brand icons, Salamanca, Port Arthur, Hobart City, because they do draw in more people' (WT1/A).

The underlying reason was not apparent from the research, but the politically oriented nature of tourism as a primary contributor to the State's economy may weigh as a factor regarding the marketability of some shires over others. While a minority of participants perceived their relationship with Tourism Tasmania as pro-active, the majority volunteered that dialogue was disjointed and regarded as less than satisfactory. Participants offered that a related issue had served to exacerbate the perception that Tourism Tasmania presented as less than stable and displayed a propensity for frequent organisational restructuring.

'Tourism Tasmania has had seven or so changes since I've been here. So different strategies, in terms of how you market Tasmania, have all impacted on our places, whether as part of the region or as a tourism destination or experience' (C1/B).

6.1.3 Third Topic: State Government influence on Tourism's Local Development

The third topic sought participant perspectives regarding the influence exerted by Tourism Tasmania over tourism's local development. The prevailing perspective offered was that Tourism Tasmania's influence would otherwise be welcome, but had presented as sporadic and inconsistent, an organisation overly distracted with marketing the State to offshore markets.

'We're pretty much left to our own devices as a council. I think we had a much closer relationship with Tourism Tasmania say 5 to 10 years ago, when there was a lot more contact. Now that Tourism Tasmania has more or less turned its back on the State and is looking more at external markets' (K2/B).

'Tourism Tasmania, their brief is to bring people to Tasmania and they don't really care where they go when they get here. They are judged on how many people get here, not what they do, how much they spend. We (Tasmania) reached a million tourists and local government is left with attracting people to their particular area, but I see an issue there, 29 councils interested in their own patch, so it can get political' (K1/B).

Perspectives recorded indicated that this focus resulted in inequitable outcomes for some municipalities due to a preference shown for Tasmanian icons judged more conducive to the marketing process. This scenario tended to exclude shires less well stocked with those attractions considered icons for tourism product.

6.1.4 Fourth Topic: Leadership in Tasmania's Tourism Sector

The fourth topic invited participant perspectives regarding the standard of leadership directing tourism in Tasmania. Responses from participants proved unambiguously negative with all declaring that tourism while a major component of the State's economy, lacked direction and suffered from poor leadership. The principle issues contributing to this condition were considered to be too many participating groups, insufficient guidance, limited collaboration and networking.

'It's not that the State doesn't have expertise, there are probably some things that they do very well, but we know universally from across government working in Tasmania, that when they need to engage with local communities to build something together, Tourism Tasmania actually just drop in. They say here it is, they assume a level of expertise, but they don't have a networked or collaborated approach to building strategies' (C1/B).

Participants volunteered the perception that Tourism Tasmania as the State's foremost

tourism expert, had not assumed leadership.

‘There is a gap between what Tourism Tasmania does and local government does. There’s no guidance, there’s no direction, nothing’ (K1/B).

More than one perspective offered that to be optimally effective tourism needed the appointment of a decisive apolitical leader capable of representing the Tasmanian product as a unified whole as distinct from twenty-nine disaggregated municipalities.

6.1.5 Fifth Topic: Communication in Tasmanian Tourism Industry

The fifth topic sought participant perspectives regarding the standard of communication between Tourism Tasmania and the State’s municipalities. The majority of perspectives recorded pointed to Tourism Tasmania’s organisational culture as less than cooperative.

‘Tourism Tasmania do not communicate. They dictate, but don’t communicate’ (D2/A).

Perspectives recorded inferred that Tourism Tasmania did not communicate regularly with local government because of the fundamental differences in purpose regarding tourism. Tourism Tasmania regarded itself as existing to generate demand while the function of local government was to act as custodian of supply, the tourism product.

‘There’s a disconnect I think actually, if we knew in advance more about their agenda, other than the first time we hear about it when its announced or the discussion has already happened around a conference table between 12 or 15 stakeholders in Hobart, and the first we hear about it is a cut and shut program’ (K1/A).

The enduring dichotomy presented by this perspective had led to a widespread consensus among municipalities of a communications disconnect. In this, guidance and direction from Tourism Tasmania as experts was not in most cases available to local government.

6.1.6 Sixth Topic: Partnership Arrangements in Tourism's Development

The sixth topic sought participant perspectives regarding partnership arrangements between local government and other tourism stakeholders in pursuit of advantaging tourism's growth. Typically, such arrangements included other municipalities and regional tourism authorities or collaborative agreements with corporate actors as Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). Partnership arrangements between local government and corporate actors were of particular interest due to the potential for the divergence of priorities involved. In this, profit agendas pursued by corporate partners had the potential to conflict with municipal mandates and thus compromised social and environmental sustainability agendas. Participant perspectives offered suggested that several Tasmanian municipalities chose to partner with commercial entities for the advantages of added tourism expertise made available from doing so.

'Local councils do some things well and some they don't. Council's are very good at rates and roads that's where their expertise is, but not a lot of expertise in tourism or economic development. Council set up a special committee and on that they have business people from three main areas. So they met, drove the original tourism development plan and they were the ones who lobbied council to bring in a tourism officer' (K1/B).

Participants volunteered that such arrangements went some way to supplement the perceived vacuum created by Tourism Tasmania's preoccupation with tourism demand. Perspectives volunteered regarding joint arrangements towards tourism's development indicated that there was generally no apparent uniformity predetermining their formation, but that rather they had evolved ad hoc and varied depending on the needs of each partner.

6.1.7 Summary: Theme A: Stakeholder Influence

The analysis of data for Theme A identified that in respect of perspectives regarding National Government as a source of influence on local tourism the majority of respondents returned that with few exceptions communication was minimal to non-existent. The exceptions referred to isolated instances where National funding for individual tourism projects had proved beneficial. In contrast, perspectives in respect of dialogue or communication between the Tasmanian Tourism Commission

(Tourism Tasmania) and local government had registered greater levels of interaction. Notwithstanding this, a significant number of respondents perceived Tourism Tasmania as a distant entity and their relationship to it as lacking consistency, an issue further exacerbated by that organisation's propensity for frequent organisational change. A number of respondents offered that the primary reason for their dissatisfaction could be attributed to Tourism Tasmania's organisational culture and its exclusive marketing focus. While perspectives offered were that their marketing strategies were well executed, this had been achieved at cost to sufficient interaction with municipalities as managers of the State's tourism product. Several participants volunteered a preference for alternative arrangements in the form of external relationships with other tourism stakeholders exemplified by partnering with neighbouring municipalities or corporate interests.

The fourth topic concerned participant perspectives regarding the standard of leadership in Tasmania's tourism industry, with several responses having noted the need for improvement across a spectrum of issues regarding tourism's leadership, management and organisational structure. A reoccurring issue was the perception that the standard of communication between local government and Tourism Tasmania was deficient with several responses indicating that Tourism Tasmania either did not communicate or communicated sporadically. This appeared mostly related to the sufficiency of available information regarding planning and more generally the aura of mystery said to surround Tourism Tasmania's intentions. Collectively, local government participant perspectives concerning the calibre of interaction with Tourism Tasmania were that the Tasmanian tourism industry was put at significant disadvantage by the current state of communications between State and local government.

The current study has used Rational Choice Theory to explore responses to the research themes. Scott (2000) has argued that RCT evolved from a need to explain behavioral responses to economic criteria. In this regard Green and Shapiro (1997) have also identified widespread agreement that people typically opt for choices best suited to their economic objectives and that this involves the maximising of advantage. A further postulate of RCT has required consistency of purpose to be present such as the wish to maximise economic advantage. In this respect

participation by governments and corporations in neoliberal tourism markets, because they are inherently competitive environments, have also engaged in pursuit of maximising economic advantage. The deciding factor for this behaviour and a further postulate of RCT was that because the benefits from participation cannot be known in advance, maximisation has constituted rational choice. It was suggested that for the six topics of Theme A that National and State government oversights regarding local government tourism issues have been reflective of rational choices determined by standing pro-growth tourism policies. Earlier discussion presented in this study had suggested that because the exclusivity of these policies have favoured increased tourism demand over product management, that the need for productive communication evident in this study's research findings may have suffered from marginalisation. This, a default position may have arisen when rational choices by government have prioritised the maximising of economic advantage through an exclusive preoccupation with the generation of tourism demand.

6.2 Theme B: Perspectives Regarding Tourism

Theme B comprised three topics (Table 6.1) that considered participant perspectives regarding the presence of tourism in their municipality. The full transcripts for these are provided in Appendix J.

Table 6.1 Theme B: Topics Concerning Local Perspectives Regarding Tourism

<i>First topic: Local tourism as an economic consideration</i>
<i>Second topic: Adequacy of financial resources for tourism's development</i>
<i>Third topic: Environmental issues arising from local tourism</i>

6.2.1 First Topic: Local Tourism as an Economic Consideration

The first topic concerned participant perspectives regarding the economic significance of local tourism. For the majority of respondents, the presence of tourism was regarded as an economic resource. This response was widespread and bolstered by the perspective that passing tourist traffic was in large part responsible for the continued viability of local businesses and retail outlets.

‘We really see tourism as a function of economic activity’ (C1/B).

More generally participants offered that economic concerns were always at the forefront of local government deliberations and that tourism was always integral to those discussions. Several participants perceived that their local stores and services provided the core of their community’s sense-of-place.

‘Particularly outside the suburban areas, they [communities] are very appreciative of the benefits of tourism and what it brings. All money that comes funds local businesses, shops, etc., keeps them viable for the benefit of the local community. Yes, if we didn’t have tourists the residents wouldn’t have petrol or groceries’ (K2/B).

For most of these participants the continued existence of such local amenities could only be assured by the presence of passing tourists. For the majority of municipalities this perspective was identified as informing local economic deliberations because tourism was acknowledged as a core factor underpinning each community’s continued wellbeing.

6.2.2 Second Topic: Adequacy of Financial Resources for Tourism

The second topic concerned participant perspectives regarding the adequacy of financial resources with which to respond to tourism’s local presence. The issue was germane to the current study because the implementation of sustainable tourism as a preferred approach to development required structured planning and sufficient funding for its implementation and monitoring.

‘There have been a lot of reports, each coming up with similar conclusions, but the crunch really is resources. Each one of these reports came up with a big list of recommendations or whatever, but the problem is, nobody is prepared to provide the resources’ (S1/B).

Participant responses to the question of funding adequacy suggested the issue has continued to weigh heavily with the majority perceiving funding levels for tourism as

inadequate and further exacerbated by the Tasmanian Government's practice of devolving increased responsibilities to municipalities.

'Devolution is most definitely an issue and it's not only in regard to tourism, but anything generally. It's easy to say, deal with issues locally when the council is local, but that places an extra financial burden on the council to find the resources. There's been a general shift of State focus to provide services and experiences locally, but there's not the necessary local money alongside to deal with that' (L1/B).

Perspectives regarding the scarcity of financial resources for tourism were generally uniform throughout the twenty-nine municipalities. However, in the widespread absence of municipal plans or strategies detailing tourism's management against which budgets could be established, it was not possible to determine whether the availability of financial resources had simply fallen short of developmental aspirations.

6.2.3 Third Topic: Environmental Issues Arising from Tourism

The third topic sought participant perspectives regarding the question of maintaining environmental quality against increases in tourism. The majority of participants acknowledged that the potential existed for the topographical environment under their charge to diminish as a direct consequence of tourism numbers. This perspective appeared widespread and in some cases had provided the focus for community forums convened to address resident's concerns.

'A little different at another area on the coast, heads were closed, there was a lot of sand, and there was an impact from the vans staying overnight. Once the grass was killed, the sand then became loose and started to blow away and made holes that water sat in' (C1/A).

and,

'So, you put a cable car up there, with a couple of hundred people going up there a day, no toilet facilities and no buildings. From that point of view it never got the community support for the project because of those sorts of environmental impacts' (K1/A).

The majority of participants displayed significant concern regarding the quality of that environment falling within their jurisdiction. However, perspectives regarding environmental quality were not in every case directed towards conservation with one respondent voicing the view that the world heritage area in Tasmania's west should be developed for its economic potential.

'We would like to cash in on environmental tourism, we've got an enormous world heritage area sitting on our back doorstep and we'd love to cash in on it, but in terms of the environment and tourism, no there's not a great deal of consideration about it' (D2/A).

6.2.4 Summary: Theme B: Perspectives Regarding Tourism

The analysis identified that perspectives by the majority of participants considered tourism's contribution essential for the wellbeing of their communities and that it was perceived as an economic mainstay for the continued viability of community businesses. Participants volunteered that the presence of tourists had ensured the continued viability of local services around which the community's sense-of-place revolved. In this regard, several participants owned to favouring marketing programs for tourism's promotion and of committing budgetary allocations for the employment of tourism officers or alternatively assigning that responsibility to an economic development officer. Perspectives regarding funding were that its availability for tourism's development had generally been inadequate and often exacerbated by the Tasmanian State Government's tendency to devolve additional responsibilities to municipalities that acted to further constrain available funds. Participant perspectives regarding environmental management indicated awareness of the impact from increased tourism, but that no conflict was foreseen in respect of tourism pursued for its economic contribution and the necessity of planning to ensure environmental sustainability.

Similar to Theme A, RCT would propose that the findings for the first two topics of Theme B were reflective of rational choices in response to the dominance of economic conditions. Particularly where the continued wellbeing of communities could be identified as contingent on the presence of tourism. The theory of rational

choices has required that they occur in the face of uncertainty in which choices would reflect the wish to first minimise costs associated with outcomes. Regarding the third topic, that of environmental issues arising from the presence of local tourism, the data gathered found that the rationality displayed by participant responses while evident had stopped short of committing to remedial choices. The study was not able to determine the reason for this.

6.3 Theme C: Perspectives Regarding Sustainability

Theme C (Table 6.2) analysed participant perspectives regarding sustainability and in particular its relationship to economic development through tourism. The first three topics considered perspectives concerning awareness of sustainability, sustainable practice and its perceived relationship in respect of tourism's development. The fourth topic investigated local awareness regarding Triple Bottom Line reporting in the management of sustainability. The full transcript of perspectives obtained from interview participants for Theme C, are provided in Appendix K.

Table 6.2 Theme C: Topics Concerning Local Perspectives Regarding Sustainability

<i>First topic:</i>	<i>Awareness of the concept of sustainability</i>
<i>Second topic:</i>	<i>Application of sustainable practices in planning</i>
<i>Third topic:</i>	<i>Sustainability as a factor in tourism's local development</i>
<i>Fourth topic:</i>	<i>Awareness of Triple Bottom Line reporting</i>

6.3.1 First Topic: Awareness of the Concept of Sustainability

The first topic sought perspectives regarding the extent to which participants were generally aware of the concept of sustainability and its place in local planning. Perspectives offered indicated considerable variation in awareness levels regarding the function and applications of the principle of social and environmental sustainability. The apparent variations appeared to result principally from insufficient information regarding local applications and its integration into planning schema.

'If we think of sustainability in environmental terms, because of the nature of businesses, I think we do pay lip service to it. We've got to get better at it' (L2/A).

and,

'We don't have much to do with sustainability, not really' (D2/A).

The implications drawn from participant perspectives were that awareness of sustainability was low perhaps having not found ready passage from Tasmania's State Government who have openly advocated its integration (Tasmanian Government, 2014). By default, each of Tasmania's twenty-nine municipalities were found to approach the issue of sustainable practice independent of any unifying guidance. In consequence, the term was frequently applied incorrectly to qualify issues unrelated to social and environmental sustainability.

6.3.2 Second Topic: Application of Sustainable Practices in Planning

The second topic sought participant perspectives regarding administrative aspects of managing for sustainability. The absence of a uniform approach to sustainability noted in the previous topic was confirmed by the variety of perspectives recorded regarding the place of sustainability in local planning deliberations.

'No and indeed, if you look at State government now, the Tasmanian Planning Commission has ditched their annual sustainable environment report, which they used to produce, that hasn't been done for three or four years' (S1/B).

and,

'The regional bodies, they are just not resourced to do it. They are apolitical, funded by government and all the councils are members without exception across the whole State, so they are potentially the ones to do it. As it currently stands, the framework is in place but it's just not resourced. State government doesn't take it seriously enough' (K2/A).

This was made apparent by the range of concerns considered relevant to its application including issues of amalgamation, administrative efficiencies, financial accountability and economic management. The evident variation in perspectives confirmed the absence of a central and agreed principle able to unify local

government perspectives towards the principle of managing for sustainable outcomes and guidelines from which implementation might proceed.

6.3.3 Third Topic: Sustainability as a Factor in Tourism's Local Development

The third topic sought participant perspectives regarding the relationship between tourism and the principle of sustainability. In common with the previous two topics perspectives regarding these two issues were not uniform, but the subject of significantly differing views. For those participants displaying a rudimentary awareness of sustainability perspectives indicated that Tasmania's topography and tourism were synonymous and the continued presence of tourists were dependent on effective environmental management.

'You've got to have sustainable resources and a lot of the tourists come here because of the clean air and water and those sorts of things. It's one area we find hard to deal with, because we are a relatively small population. We haven't got the rate base and tax base to fund a lot of infrastructure, to keep abreast of the influx of tourists and short-term stays' (L1/B).

Notwithstanding this the majority of perspectives while to varying degrees expressing awareness of the impact of tourism on the environment offered that limited resources and too little information had resulted in the issue being held in suspension.

'There are countless examples where you can say, this is what should be done in order to improve sustainability, whether environmentally or economically, but no-one is actually saying, well, how do we actually do this?' (K2/A).

No perspectives recorded had acknowledged a link between the continued integrity of environmental standards and the importance of managing local tourism to ensure its long-term sustainability.

6.3.4 Fourth Topic: Triple Bottom Line Reporting for Sustainability

The fourth topic sought to identify perspectives regarding the use of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) reporting among local government as a monitoring instrument for implementing and managing sustainability. The analysis identified broad awareness

among respondents regarding TBL, but that this awaited translation into practice with several volunteering that discussions had yet to progress beyond that point.

'In council, we do touch on TBL in terms that every report needs to demonstrate social, economic and environmental impact, but it's not a huge driver, not strong. The bottom line is always the budget' (L2/B).

However, misunderstanding detected regarding the intended function of TBL reporting during the analysis may have accounted for the near absence of its practical application. In still other perspectives offered participants had suggested that while TBL was understood, monitoring for its social and environmental components continued to be regarded as subordinate to economic accountability.

'Definitely, but when the accountant reports to the council its all dollars and figures. When we do our annual report, we report on the social benefits and the impact of what we do on the environment, but apart from that, no, TBL is not reported properly. I think it should, I think it would be great, how do you report community development in dollars and cents, you can't?' (K1/B).

6.3.5 Summary: Theme C: Perspectives Regarding Sustainability

Analysis of participant perspectives regarding sustainable practices have revealed the existence of broad differences regarding its meaning and application. These appear to have occurred due to the absence of a uniform directive regarding sustainability and the procedures suitable for the management of social and environmental issues. A spectrum of perspectives ranging from awareness to marginal understanding on this issue may signal that a directive regarding sustainability from Tasmania's State Government has been overdue. In its absence integration of sustainable practices able to ensure socio-cultural and environmental monitoring standards using TBL to monitor tourism generated by Tourism Tasmania and Tourism Australia have awaited direction. The fourth topic recorded participant perspectives regarding awareness of TBL reporting as an instrument with which to manage tourism for sustainable outcomes. While several participants shared the perspective that the practical application of TBL was overdue this had not progressed beyond the discussion stage.

When the results of Theme C were contextualised to RCT the absence of clarity regarding the necessary precepts for sustainability made identification of determinants on which local government could base rational choices, untenable. The research concluded that the existence of considerable variation in local awareness levels regarding the purpose and application of the principle of sustainability had resulted from insufficient information regarding its purpose and relationship to local planning policies. Thus, except where economic factors were found to override the issue identification of precedents on which to establish choices as rational responses to the issue of sustainability were absent.

6.4 Theme D: Perspectives Regarding Community

Theme D comprised three topics (Table 6.3) collectively constituting the more germane responses by Tasmania's local government management personnel regarding the relationship between community and tourism. The perspectives recorded concerned responses to the local presence of tourists, the social context of tourism and tourism's economic value. The full transcript of perspectives obtained from interview participants for Theme D are available as Appendix L.

Table 6.3: Theme D: Topics Concerning Community

<i>First topic:</i>	<i>Community perspectives regarding tourism</i>
<i>Second topic:</i>	<i>The social context of tourists</i>
<i>Third topic:</i>	<i>Community perspectives regarding the economic value of tourism</i>

6.4.1 First Topic: Community Perspectives Regarding Tourism

The first topic dealt with participant perspectives regarding their community's general response to the presence of tourism. Perspectives offered revealed an element of divisiveness declaring that some residents did not favour the presence of visitors with responses ranging from welcoming to mere tolerance.

'We can't win with the community. Whatever we do with tourism will be praised by some and criticised by others. It seems to divide parts of the community' (W1/A).

It was conjectured that because some Tasmanian communities identified strongly with their sense-of-place this may have predisposed them to notions of exclusivity in which responses had cast visitors as unwelcome outsiders.

‘Over the past few years there has been growth at the local level, certainly in terms of collaborative conversations about tourism’ (D1/B).

More generally however perspectives volunteered suggested that tourism was accommodated albeit with isolated exceptions.

6.4.2 Second Topic: The Social Context of Tourists

The second topic was concerned with the social context in which Tasmania’s communities perceived tourists. The analysis identified that for some participants the presence of tourists was perceived as adding social and cultural capital. In several cases residents had accommodated social change and the resettling of people from Australia’s mainland. In this regard acceptance of individuals from different regions, but also different cultures were regarded as contributing to the community’s growth and therefore its economy.

‘Communities are very positive about tourists, they’re very aware that we wouldn’t have the number of businesses if it wasn’t for the tourists. We wouldn’t be able to sustain them if we didn’t have other people coming thru, buying and trading’ (NM1/A).

In this respect, the regard with which Tasmania’s communities revered their sense-of-place had also been accepting of those committing to settle, but less so of tourists only passing through. More generally the analysis suggested that these communities did not identify cultural difference where this involved a commitment to settle into the community.

6.4.3 Third Topic: Community Perspectives Regarding the Economic

Value of Tourism

The third topic regarding perspectives concerning community responses to tourism were that its presence was seen as essentially economic. For some communities where reliance on tourism constituted a major source of economic support this proved unambiguously the case. This was confirmed by one respondent who when referring to tourism noted that it had served as the community's saviour.

'Look, twenty years ago, tourism wasn't anything to do with councils. The locals said, look we're dying here we're a rural area and the shops are closing, what can we do? They decided that tourism was their saviour and it was. So, tourism is very big here now' (K1/B).

Another, that tourism had been responsible for the number of businesses allowed to remain viable. Of interest, the perspective that the presence of tourism provided economic support for the community was found to be only marginally less in instances where agricultural production constituted the primary support for that local economy.

6.4.4 Summary: Theme D, Perspectives Regarding Community

Perspectives gathered from interview participants regarding their community's responses indicated that while the majority of Tasmania's municipalities favoured the presence of tourism for its economic contribution, in isolated instances the presence of tourists had acted to polarise some factions within the host community and where tourists were regarded as intrusive. Notwithstanding, perspectives regarding the importance of tourism's economic value predominated, even in instances where agriculture provided the economic mainstay. Several respondents indicated that the economic relevance of tourism lay in its ability to maintain the viability of local business that constituted the community's core and sense-of-place and businesses that might otherwise have been forced to close. Collectively, the findings from the three topics for Theme D indicated that community perspectives regarding the presence of tourism, while predominantly economic, included a diverse range of perceptual attitudes that both welcomed tourists, but also pointed to the presence of intolerance.

The determinants identified as underpinning responses to Theme D indicated that rational choices as responses to tourism were predicated predominantly on economic considerations. Where other factors such as intolerance towards tourists within communities could be identified and because there was no supporting evidence linking this behaviour to economic motives, the issue of irrational responses raised rendered the postulates of RCT as untenable (Boudon, 2009)

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented primary research data resulting from thirty-eight interviews conducted with participants selected from Tasmania's local government. The interviews sought to capture participant perspectives regarding tourism, stakeholder influences, their perspectives regarding tourism and of sustainability and community responses to tourism. The purpose of the research was to determine whether tourism at the local level of government in Tasmania was managed sustainably in response to a global UNWTO initiative that had recommended remedial action in mitigation of the negative social and environmental impacts associated with tourism's externalities. In this regard the primary purpose of the research has been to interrogate local perspectives in the context of Tasmania in preparation for addressing the research question – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* As it has applied in respect of Tasmania, the vested nature of commercial interests in the tourism industry had recommended the choice of its local government employees as a relatively objective source of local perspectives.

At the outset, interviewer/interviewee relationships were nurtured with the intention of encouraging candor from respondents during sessions. Analysis of the resulting data identified that the prevailing perspective regarding tourism among the thirty-eight interview respondents was of its potential to confer economic growth. For the majority of participants, the perspective was that it was the continuing presence of tourists that ensured the future viability of local business as the core of the sense-of-place constituting local community. However, for several respondents this perspective was moderated by claims that limitations in funding for tourism continued to frustrate local developmental ambitions. The majority of participants also regarded environmental quality as important for their communities, but with only marginal

evidence that conservation and sustainable management were considered necessary. The predominance of these perspectives ran concurrently with perspectives that increases in tourism promised economic growth and were not regarded as conflictual. Rather, the opposing positions were presumed complementary in which economic growth through tourism was thought possible because of the presence of cultural attractions and environmental icons as tourist product. In isolated instances participants acknowledged awareness of the triple bottom line reporting tool as a mechanism for ensuring environmental sustainability in the presence of tourism, but that this had not progressed beyond the discussion stage.

Limited perspectives regarding awareness of the issue of tourism and of sustainable practices detected during phase two of the research pointed to the inadequacy of local information available with which to progress these issues. Based on the perspectives recorded the majority of municipalities appeared to approach tourism's development in the absence of informed guidance regarding its social and environmental impact and with limited ability to monitor either. In this regard, the research identified both the National and State Governments as sources of tourism expertise, but other than communication focused on economic issues, guidance from these sources regarding the development of tourism for sustainable outcomes had not occurred.

The forgoing perceptual responses to tourism and that have included the issue of sustainability were predicated on and resulted from available information that determined the rationality of choices as a basis for action. In this regard, this study utilised RCT as a lens to explore local perspectives regarding the sufficiency of information on which choices were based. A central assumption of RCT is that actions are necessarily required to proceed on the basis of incomplete information (Green and Shapiro, 1994). This occurs because the point in time in which information will be complete cannot be predetermined and therefore requires that the rationality of choices be premised on uncertainty. This postulate of RCT has not specified the adequacy of information, merely that all rational choices can be assumed information deficient. In respect of Tasmanian municipal responses to tourism and choices regarding its development, the study determined the information on which those choices proceeded did so based on very limited information regarding the conditions under which they proceeded. The study deduced that while municipalities

felt bound to respond to the presence of tourism, the information on which they proceeded was inadequate, but that this competitive disadvantage and the limited information involved leading to less than effective choices was not acknowledged.

The issue of limited information was also demonstrated by the less than clear response taken by Tasmanian municipalities towards sustainable practice resulting in instances where the broad-based wish to preserve topographical integrity was advanced while having simultaneously exposed it to an indeterminate increase in tourism. Particularly in regard to Tasmania's municipalities the analysis of local perspectives revealed that choices regarding tourism were based exclusively on the maximising of economic value. In these the potential for conflict with other issues such as sustainable approaches designed to protect socio-cultural and environmental capital did not arise because they were not sufficiently understood.

Rational choice theory has found significant favour among economists because it has offered a basis for explaining behavioral responses and especially those involving economic transactions. RCT is part of a broader school of related theories governing social exchange that have been applied to explore behavioral responses whether concerning the individual or groups in social settings. Analysis of data for phase two of the current study concluded that Tasmania's local government responses to tourism's development and the concept of sustainability with which to ensure its long-term tenure, was unsupported by sufficient information. This has concluded the two-phase research design for the study. Chapter seven to follow discusses the results of the analysis by addressing the research question and two sub-questions.

Chapter Seven

Discussions

7.0 Introduction

This chapter has discussed the results of analysis for phases one and two of the research and compared these findings to the literature. The research question asked – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* To address this and the two research sub-questions, the study's methodological approach argued that answers sufficient to satisfy these questions would first require the interrogation of perspectives regarding both tourism and sustainability as currently understood at the local level of Tasmanian government. The study proceeded on the assumption that in common with current challenges levelled at tourism markets globally regarding the unsustainability of its externalities (Mowforth and Munt, 2009; Buckley, 2012), replication of this issue could be expected to manifest locally. This assumption was supported by the global diffusion of a UNWTO edict when Australia was a signatory, that urged the implementation of sustainable tourism at destination levels.

The study was platformed on four interrelated themes. First, tourism's stakeholders were considered as a spectrum of influences acting to direct tourism's development at destinations in Tasmania. Second, local responses to the impact of these agendas were considered as perspectives resulting from the presence of tourism. Third the study interrogated what was known locally regarding approaches to sustainability and whether concern for social and environmental integrity had found it integrated into tourism's management. Fourth, the study interpreted Tasmanian local government perspectives regarding their community's responses to increased tourism contextualised as socially constructed and shared meanings. Rational Choice Theory was used to explore the resulting data arguing that concern was warranted regarding the socio-cultural and environmental risks posed to Tasmania by the dominance of neoliberal market orthodoxies directing the political economy of tourism at Australian National and State Government levels. The current study identified that influences emanating from rational choices made by governments in competitive market economies were an influencing factor in tourism's growth in Tasmania. In this regard

the theory of rational choice (Scott, 2000) was employed to explore variations in behavioural responses towards tourism at different levels of Tasmanian government.

7.1 Discussion Concerning Tourism Stakeholders

The content analysis applied for phase one of the study identified the presence of a spectrum of stakeholders acting to exert varying degrees of influence on the form and direction of tourism at the municipal level in Tasmania. And of particular concern the first of two research sub-questions had asked - *to what extent has sustainable tourism been incorporated into local council economic development strategies?*

Both phases one and two of the study determined that the principle influence directing tourism's development in Tasmania aligned with the prevailing neoliberal paradigm privileging tourism's global growth agendas. Fletcher (2011) (see also Dredge and Jenkins, 2012) has also drawn attention to the political economy involved in which tourism's development was maximised for its economic contribution but at cost to tourism's social and environmental dimensions. The study's findings regarding the approach by Tasmania's local government to tourism confirmed the extent to which this trading culture has dominated and in which rational choices have resulted in the pursuit of market share as the precursor of economic growth.

Tasmanian State Government tourism policies were mirrored in references made to tourism's pro-growth economic promise in all twenty-nine local council strategic planning documents analysed for phase one of the research. The purpose of these publications was to advise local electorates regarding the intentions contained in their council's agenda over a five-year minimum. But, while no State legislative requirement has provided for tourism's inclusion, Burns and Bibbings (2009) have noted that since the resurgence of a neoliberalist free market discourse all tiers of government have come to acknowledge and confer significant importance on the generation and development of tourism based on its economic relevance. Similarly, the current study identified significant attention directed to the growth of tourism for its economic importance. In this regard, the commonality afforded tourism's global economic developmental role in the literature (Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston, 2012; Airey and Ruhanen, 2014) was found mirrored in rational choices identified at the local council level in Tasmania. This finding was clearly in evidence for phase one

and subsequently confirmed by the majority of participants interviewed in phase two of the research.

'I think in its broad sense tourism is recognised as an important part of the local economy' (C4/A).

Phase one of the study confirmed governments at both National and State levels as stakeholders influencing council deliberations regarding tourism. However, as sources of influence and despite the National Government's *Tourism 2020* initiative, the gamut of these influences were found to be other than uniform. Despite the pro-growth mantra characterising tourism policy at the National level, influence on Tasmania's local councils and local government tier appeared negligible relative to that for State Government. It may be argued that this should not be unexpected given the relationship expected to result from the interaction of government instrumentalities residing within the same State. However, the lack of dialogue between national and local government regarding tourism was worthy of note. Airey and Ruhanen (2014) have attributed such oversights to an inherent weakness in the national tourism policy-making process, which has been overly distracted with satisfying the demands of a neoliberal economic ideology. Dredge and Jenkins (2009) have also argued that despite the need to more fully acknowledge the increasing complexities of a multi-sectoral tourism theatre the exclusivity of the Australian Government's market driven focus has dominated tourism policies for over two decades.

Earlier, criticism towards the exclusivity of this national focus on demand generation had culminated in a commitment to greater accountability regarding tourism supply in Australia with the *National Long-term Tourism Strategy* (2009b) that subsequently provided the basis for the national *Tourism 2020* initiative. In *Tourism 2020* the National Government's policy commitment to ensure Australia's share of global tourism in competitive markets had called for collective participation by all tiers of government. For Tasmania, this edict arguably assumed increased importance due to the island's greater reliance on tourism as an economic cornerstone of GDP. But although Dredge and Jenkins (2009) have noted that the Commonwealth's National Long Term Tourism Strategy Discussion Paper voiced dissatisfaction with the continued dominance of market driven tourism policies by government, data resulting

from the current study for both phases one and two of the research could detect no instance where communication had been received regarding *Tourism 2020* or guidance regarding suitable responses to the significant increases in visitor volume anticipated. Beyond infrequent and competitive funding rounds for local projects dialogue with Tourism Australia as a source of tourism expertise was found to be minimal to non-existent. Participant perspectives offered during interviews for phase two had described the calibre of their municipality's relationship with Tourism Australia as distant.

Phase one of the research identified the State Government's tourism commission (Tourism Tasmania) as the predominant stakeholder in respect of municipal deliberations regarding responses to tourism. Nevertheless, while approximately half of local councils had described their relationship with Tourism Tasmania as positive for the remaining half this detail was omitted. Given the prominence afforded tourism in the documents analysed for phase one the absence of acknowledgement by the other half regarding Tourism Tasmania was noteworthy. Piercy and Ellinger (2015) have argued that questions concerning communications sufficiency between different organisational tiers were not uncommon and could manifest as cultural divides due to the inherent differences between demand and supply. Phase two of the research subsequently confirmed to this probability with several interview participants from local government (tourism supply) describing communication received from Tourism Tasmania (demand) as sporadic and unproductive.

'There's no discussion with us, zero. No guidance that I know of. We're doing things on our own, and a bit with the RTO because we're part of it, but there's no direct benefit to us' (B/1A).

Several participants described the calibre of communication with Tourism Tasmania as less than effective due to enduring cultural differences in which the latter did not acknowledge the State's municipalities as sufficiently informed regarding tourism. Interview participants also volunteered the perspective that because Tourism Tasmania chose to assume the role of expert this blunted the opportunity for collaboration. Other participants, in accord with perspectives offered by Airey and Ruhanen (2014) considered Tourism Tasmania to be overly fixated on generating

demand for the Tasmanian product through marketing agendas. Stank, Esper, Crook and Autry (2012) have argued that such breakdowns in productive dialogue between supply and demand factions in organisations, as exemplified by Tasmanian State versus municipal interests, are not unusual despite being charged with responsibility for the same product. In this regard criticism that emerged from local government during phase two of the study centred on two primary issues.

First, Tourism Tasmania's exclusive marketing focus has been at cost to adequate management of the State's tourism product (Fletcher, 2011; Airey and Ruhanen, 2014). In respect of responsibility for the State's regional tourism product, several participants offered the view that Tourism Tasmania regarded that this rested with the Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs). The content analysis for phase one identified that Tourism Tasmania acted generally to influence local deliberations via RTOs as State funded planning and marketing intermediaries, however only twenty per cent of municipalities chose to acknowledge the relevance of these relationships. The literature was somewhat fragmented on this issue but in a study conducted in South Australia Carson, Carson and Hodge (2014) had challenged the functionality of RTOs. The study found that the absence of a supporting development strategy that recognised the community's sense-of-place had led to a predisposition among peripheral communities towards reduced tourism competitiveness. The study identified that an embedded dependence on public sector leadership had served to stymie ambition, inhibiting the exchange of knowledge on which tourism could develop. The study identified that the externally driven boundaries determined by government and serviced by RTO's had acted to dampen local innovation by ignoring the community's historically grounded perception of its sense-of-place. In an earlier study conducted in NSW and Western Australia by Dredge, Ford and Whitford (2011) the relevance of RTOs had also been questioned and the current study has identified the influence of RTOs in Tasmania as marginalised and generally regarded as less than significant. Their relevance found to be further compromised by insufficient funding.

'...they [RTOs] are grossly under resourced and we're talking about 2 or 3 people for Southern Tasmania, they're the ones who are supposed to look after the quality of the experience that the tourist gets' (K2/B).

In respect of Local Tourism Authorities (LTAs), local volunteer tourism organising collectives, municipalities had identified varying degrees of dialogue, but it was not the case that these organisations were available for each municipality or that in cases where they did exist that they were considered effective. Beaumont and Dredge (2010) have argued that it is frequently the case that the effectiveness of such local organisations is reliant on a positive blend of the personalities and politics involved.

Second, while municipalities acted as custodians of the tourism product they were not listened to by Tourism Tasmania who considered local government possessed of insufficient expertise. Data from phase two of the research, had identified a significant communication disconnect between Tourism Tasmania and Tasmania's municipalities that acted to impact adversely on the development of local tourism.

'Nothing gets explained to us by Tourism Tasmania or Gov't or regional bodies, where we might sit within the picture. I think it would help if we did, we've spent a lot of time internally trying to figure out, well, what are we supposed to be doing?' (K2/B).

This issue held particular significance for several participants who volunteered that the tenor of dialogue exchanged was less than cooperative and describing it as unpredictable. Still others offered the perspective that responsibility for the enduring communications gap fell to Tourism Tasmania as local government did not profess to be experts on tourism, but rather an administrative body charged with ensuring the continued integrity of community and environment as the Tasmanian product. In a related example from the literature Healy, Rau and McDonagh (2012) (see also Moscardo, 2011) had confirmed this exclusionary approach by government to tourism's development in which local knowledge was marginalised in favour of market-oriented agendas pursuing short-term economic benefits and in which participation by the local communities involved were resisted.

Davidson and Lockwood (2008) have noted that for Tasmania intergovernmental relationships have continued to be largely characterised by *dirigiste* in which economic development is cored in central government. Possibly as a consequence of this, while a minority of interview participants described their relationship with

Tourism Tasmania as amicable the majority declared a preference for pursuing tourism independently. In this regard, several of Tasmania's municipalities had initiated governance arrangements with the private sector in a bid to compete in tourism markets with some commissioning marketing reports from external specialists (Appendix D). Phase one identified approximately eighty per cent of Tasmanian municipalities as party to Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in respect of tourism's development while several interview respondents from phase two confirmed that significant value was placed on such agreements. These included cross-border agreements with neighbouring councils or with corporate bodies courted for their expertise.

Several of Tasmania's municipalities acknowledged the touristic value of these relationships, partnerships favoured for their amenability to customisation for specific tourism projects. Moscardo (2011) has argued regarding the potential for unintended consequences to arise from such arrangements where municipalities commit to conserving social and environmental capital, while the interests of corporate partners are best served through maximising profits by commodification of the same resource. External relationships entered into by Tasmania's municipalities were identified in both phases one and two, but the advisability of exercising caution in respect of such arrangements due to the disparate agendas involved was not in evidence. More generally, the study succeeded in establishing that tourism stakeholder influences, while manifesting in a myriad of forms that included government and private enterprise, did so primarily in pursuit of economic agendas were pro-market and competitive in orientation (Davidson and Lockwood, 2008). The generation of tourism demand as a universal focus identified among stakeholders was argued to reflect choices that pursued the maximising of tourism's growth and were rational responses to participation in competitive market environments.

This study has argued that such a universal focus was at cost to adequate attention given to the continuing integrity of the tourism product on which the same economic aspirations were premised. The issue is mirrored on a global scale and reflective of the imbalance favouring neoliberal market led growth over the need for social and environmental accountability (UNWTO/UNEP, 2007; UNWTO, 2008; UNWTO/UNEP, 2009). This conflict had found expression in the diffusion of a

UNWTO edict regarding advocacy for the installation of sustainable tourism at destination levels. At the time of commencing the current study the Australian Government had been a signatory to this accord, but has since withdrawn UNWTO membership in 2015. The combined research effort constituting phases one and two of the research failed to locate any instance where receipt of the UNWTO initiative had been acknowledged.

7.2 Discussion Concerning Local Perspectives Towards Tourism

The first sub-question considered National and State Government, but other stakeholders exerting an influence in respect of Tasmanian municipal approaches to tourism. As distinct from higher tiers of government, local government and their councils were not mandated to pursue the development of tourism but rather, their administrative charter was to ensure the wellbeing of those communities falling under their jurisdiction. Notwithstanding this, increases in influxes of tourism into local municipalities as a direct result of national and state marketing strategies have found virtually all municipalities redefining themselves as tourism destinations.

‘Tourism is our key industry, the biggest employer in the municipality, and also the biggest industry in terms of how much money it draws into the municipality. Tourism is central to all our economic conversations’ (K1/A).

Dredge and Whitford (2011:479) have argued that it is not the case that local governments have ordinarily housed the specialised knowledge sufficient to impact tourism’s highly competitive and often complex commercial markets. They have cautioned against a lack of distinction regarding public versus private interests and where ‘knowledge and expertise within the public sphere is largely controlled by corporate and State interests’. Bramwell (2006) has also provided an example where tourism developers and the resolute nature of profit agendas have proved sufficient to override government policies ostensibly platformed on conservation concerns. Phase one of the current study identified a number of Tasmanian councils who chose to identify arrangements with private actors from tourism’s corporate sector.

The content analysis for phase one identified that perspectives among Tasmanian councils regarding the presence of tourism were exclusively one of trade and largely

divorced from social and environmental considerations (Dredge, 2009). Even where other commercial sectors such as agriculture and mining received a significant rating, local aspirations to grow tourism volume were found to be widespread. Data from phase one identified that eighty-two per cent of Tasmanian local councils sought growth in tourism with marginally less articulating this in marketing and promotional terms in which their destination's environmental attributes were utilised as tourism capital. However, while the majority of local council documents expressed this position the widespread rhetoric supporting tourism's growth appeared unsupported by an effective operational strategy with which to realise the associated economic promise. The issue has not been unique to Tasmania, with Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston (2012:414) arguing that despite aggressive forecasts of significant growth in tourism demand, the presence of competing legislative environments and 'messy' interactions have continued to inhibit tourism's development. The current study suggested this to be the case for the majority of Tasmania's municipalities where action towards implementing growth in tourism in real terms has been confined to marketing plans commissioned from external sources. The general tenor of this response to tourism found one fifth of Tasmania's local councils declaring in favour of its development as a potential source of employment, while with one exception comment regarding the adequacy of current infrastructure and plant as preconditions for accommodating tourism's presence were not in evidence.

During interviews for phase two, participants declared that tourism enjoyed elevated status on the understanding that it would improve the modest state of the majority of Tasmania's local economies. Consensus at the municipal level to accord tourism elevated status was the result of rational choices in response to the widely assumed economic promise associated with tourism's development. But on this issue, Buckley (2012) has argued that rational choices determining National and State government pro-growth tourism policies, in which a fixation on economic growth and tourism as its chosen vehicle have dominated, were inherently flawed. In this regard Fennell and Ebert (2004) have also argued that preoccupations with securing tourism's economic bounty risked marginalising the negative social and environmental impacts associated with tourism's excesses. This state of affairs regarding fixations over tourism's economic performance has appeared no less apparent among destinations in Tasmania. In phase two of the research interview participants were able to identify

particular pressures from State government regarding the financial performance of municipalities that suggested issues falling outside an essentially economic framework were similarly dismissed.

‘At the moment, the State Government is putting pressure on us all to have long-term financial plans and a whole range of auditing structures in place so that sustainability becomes a major issue for councils around the State’ (C1/A).

Phase two of the research identified an altogether more pragmatic dynamic acting to determine local perspectives regarding tourism. Several participants asserted that were local tourism to decline significant community austerity would follow. For these communities, the presence of tourists amounted to continued financial viability for local businesses with several respondents, especially from smaller municipalities, interested to emphasise that tourism constituted an essential cornerstone for their survival. However, despite the predominantly pro-growth perspective identified regarding tourism, the majority acknowledged limited financial resources as the primary factor constraining responses to tourism’s development.

‘From the council’s perspective, they definitely understand the value of tourism to the region and are very committed to tourism, but very limited by financial resources’ (W1/A),

In consequence, while the rates base of larger municipalities tended to relax financial constraints, those reliant on smaller bases were denied the necessary surplus required for tourism. Even where such funding allocations resulted from carefully managed reserves the relative promotional impact in competitive tourism markets were modest and in all cases subordinated by the primary mandate of ensuring adequate administration.

Data resulting from both phases one and two of the research indicated that Tasmania’s local councils and local government, while favouring pro-growth policies regarding tourism, were poorly equipped to respond to its presence. Phase one identified that the existence of plans or strategies with which to progress these aspirations registered at

below forty per cent and in these instances the majority of initiatives were confined to marketing strategies commissioned from external specialists whose forte was also limited to marketing. The forgoing limitations aside, Tasmanian municipal responses to tourism appeared conditioned by limited competencies regarding how to approach its development. An earlier study by Dredge, Ford and Whitford (2011) had forecast the need for increased attention by local government in Australia towards tourism's local management in line with increased efficiencies. However, data for the current study indicated that because economic growth through tourism persisted as the prevailing aspiration for municipalities, the perception proliferated that marketing was the only strategy necessary for ensuring positive outcomes. In the vast majority of cases therefore, initiatives were confined to marketing expenditures, limited to local knowledge and funding, excluded non-economic factors and did not venture into wider developmental processes (Moscardo, 2011). Regarding the source and availability of information germane to the planning of local tourism, during phase two of the research several interview participants identified both National and State Government tourism commissions as repositories of tourism expertise (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009; Government of Tasmania, 2011b; Government of Tasmania, 2013a), but that these had not been made available for the benefit of Tasmania's local government.

Divorced from sufficient expertise with which to proceed, the responses by LTOs where they existed had nevertheless sought to maximise tourism's benefits, but based on inherently limited competencies regarding planning. This finding paralleled that of Dredge (2006b) who had noted the limitations affecting local tourism networks in which limited expertise served to deny benefits otherwise available from adopting a holistic perspective. Ideally, these benefits should have included consideration of the sufficiency of infrastructure and the advantages of detailed planning schema over the longer term with which to adequately address increased visitor numbers and visitor expectations. At the time of conducting the current study, although Dredge and Jenkins (2009), Fletcher (2011) and more generally the literature, situated National and State tourism commissions as experts in their fields, no evidence was available to indicate that informed guidance regarding tourism's local management had been forthcoming for Tasmania's municipalities. In consequence, local perspectives regarding tourism appeared largely limited to local knowledge regarding how, and in

what way, to maximise the economic promise widely believed to follow the presence of tourism generated at distance from National and State Government marketing.

Phase two of the study also identified expressions of concern that Tasmania's tourism industry continued to be constrained by the absence of effective State leadership. The widespread tenor of this complaint from participants proved unambiguously negative, declaring that tourism leadership in Tasmania lacked direction. The issue, also raised by Dredge (2006) in respect of tourism's management at destination levels, identified contributory causes as too many participating groups, ineffective communication and limited collaboration. In the current study participants volunteered the perception that Tourism Tasmania as the State's foremost tourism expert, should have assumed leadership.

'We [Tasmania] went thru a KPMG review around four years ago now, and it found that something like 93 groups were involved in tourism, all getting in the way of each other' (M1/B).

These findings have paralleled comment by Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston (2012) who have argued a lack of clarity as characterising tourism legislation, suggesting that the political fervor with which tourism's economic benefits are pursued, has obscured the core issue of sufficient and effective non-partisan governance by which all parties might achieve sustainable outcomes. In this regard Aall (2014) has suggested that in the absence of effective leadership there is the danger that rather than sustainable tourism by which the environment would benefit, it is the growth of tourism that will be sustained. In this regard, the current study cited several participants who identified a communication disconnect in the industry, suggesting that this resulted from the absence of a strong non-partisan leadership personality such as exemplified by nomination of a director of operations. Trudeau-Poskas and Messer (2015) have also argued that the benefit of such leaders lies in their ability to garner effective relationships in the face of organisational complexity. It is the core value required of leadership when in pursuit of sound civic and community engagement. One interview participant suggested that leadership of tourism in Tasmania would best be assigned to such an identity, to an apolitical figure capable of unifying the industry's disparate sectors for the general benefit of the tourism product and the State's economy. The

issue of leadership was also placed on the agenda for Australia's *National Long-Term Tourism Strategy* noting that for the tourism industry 'Strong leadership is needed in order to achieve substantive policy outcomes across jurisdictions and portfolios...that addresses both demand-side and supply-side issues' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009:6). Despite pronouncements contained within this document regarding the necessity of coordinated leadership and excellence in product the research could detect no evidence that this had progressed in Tasmania (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009b).

This section has discussed data resulting from the study and particularly local perspectives regarding the presence of tourism drawn from interviews during phase two. These identified that Tasmania's municipalities in common with the prevailing market oriented policies directing Australia's National and State tourism chose to pursue tourism's growth exclusively for its economic value. However, Coffey and Marston (2013) have pointed out the potential for conflict to arise from this neoliberal orientation. That it has been recognised globally as posing a significant threat to the socio-cultural and environmental integrity of destinations particularly where these were subjected to indeterminate visitor influxes. The current study has determined that Tasmanian municipalities, while advocating increases in tourism's growth, have acknowledged no inherent contradiction regarding the continued integrity of the social and environmental base on which that tourism was reliant.

'We had a forum here recently, it was an economic renewal action plan together with the community, and people consistently spoke about tourism's potential. They didn't know really what that meant, but they'd heard it spoken about in the press, so tourism was talked up' (M1/B).

The Australian Government's *Tourism 2020* initiative has actively sought significant increases in visitation particularly from Asia, tourism volume ultimately anticipated to impact on Tasmanian communities. But Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston (2012) have observed that evidence of a strategy with which to adequately accommodate this influx or at the very least caution exercised regarding the potential for excessive tourism to compromise the quality of local environments, was not apparent.

7.3 Discussion Concerning Local Perspectives Towards Sustainability

The objective of this study has been to determine the extent to which Tasmanian local government policies and practices regarding tourism have been informed by sustainable practices. In Australia, there has been significant confusion and ambiguity caused by the absence of legislation with which the implementation of sustainable tourism might proceed. A study by Ruhanen, Reid and Davidson (2011) identified over 200 pieces of separate tourism legislation that in many instances were deemed incompatible. In Tasmania Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston (2012) have drawn attention to a lattice of directives between the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, local councils and other governmental Acts and policies that have similarly acted to inhibit development. The current study determined to identify circumstances acting to influence the integration or resistance to sustainable tourism at the municipal level across Tasmania. These included the spectrum of stakeholders from different tiers of government and also included the degree to which local community aspirations have influenced municipal choices. In this regard the second research sub-question asked - *to what extent have the principles of sustainability been incorporated into the Tasmanian local government decision-making process in relation to tourism's development?* The following discussion considers factors that in aggregate have determined local awareness regarding sustainability, its relationship to local socio-cultural and environmental concerns and its relationship to tourism.

For phase one of the research the majority of Tasmania's local council strategic planning documents acknowledged the concept of sustainability and a marginally greater number identified it as a required precept for local development. These findings were in contrast to a low count of fourteen per cent regarding the value of a reporting standard such as TBL that could ensure sustainability (Slaper and Hall, 2011). More generally the findings indicated that among Tasmania's council perspectives regarding the principles of sustainability were in the majority of cases unrelated to those requirements considered necessary to achieve effective environmental management. Despite the positive regard expressed for the term awareness regarding the principles of sustainability and the concept of sustainable tourism were limited. Limited awareness among local government towards the function of sustainability is not unique to Tasmania. When conducting interviews similar to those for the current study Ruhanen (2013:93) identified a parallel

condition among municipalities in rural Queensland. ‘A key challenge that was identified through the in-depth interviews was local governments’ lack of understanding about the sustainability concept in practice’.

For the majority of municipalities, the current research suggested that awareness of the principle of managing for sustainability was understood to mean the option of integrating the concept into municipal planning, but that this was not a common occurrence. Frequent use of the term in the council documents analysed during phase one were, with one exception, unsupported by evidence for its operationalisation. This was subsequently confirmed during interviews for phase two by the majority of participants who displayed limited awareness of the concept. One municipality offered that their offices housed a sustainability committee and that such matters were routinely referred to them.

‘There’s environmental sustainability that needs to be managed, but again, this is not happening, the management of these sites is not happening’ (K2/A),

Multiple instances arising in data from phase one of the research had indicated that Tasmania’s twenty-nine local councils have employed the term ‘sustainability’ imprecisely to connote general awareness of the term.

The term ‘sustainable’ is used variously to describe ‘sustainable management’, ‘sustainable infrastructure’, ‘sustainable service delivery’, ‘sustainable economy’, ‘sustainable development’ and ‘financial sustainability’ and in effect nullifying the term’s precision (page 156).

The findings pointed to an identifiable gap between rhetoric acknowledging the concept of sustainability and the necessary steps for its actual implementation. Again, the situation was found not to be unique to Tasmania; Buckley (2012:535) has argued that focus was invariably at cost to notions of sustainability by centering on tourism’s economic aspects ‘with attention to social and environmental aspects confined to legal compliance, political maneuvering, marketing and public relations’. It was conjectured that the widespread use of the term may have followed in the wake of the Tasmanian Government’s proclamation that development should proceed sustainably

(Tasmanian Government, 2014). Liberal employment of the term throughout strategic planning schema among municipalities suggested a term currently in vogue as distinct from regard for its actual function and absent the specifics with which to progress implementation. Ruhanen (2013) has suggested that it is perhaps the case that the inherent protocols attending sustainable development may not be stated in precise terms due to limited input received regarding education on the subject. Olsson (2009) has argued that at the local level of government such matters are often expressed in vague and imprecise terms. The consequences of doing so have been that sustainability as a concept was subject to local interpretation in which there was no interregional spread of ideas, but an arbitrary response spanning from positive regard to ignorance and resistance. Among Tasmania's local government such characteristics were found to apply to the majority of interview responses regarding the issue of sustainability.

'Its only just starting here, we are starting to report on some environmental and social areas. We seem to be reporting more on the social side in the community, more surveys coming around. But, no, as far as the complete reporting, we're not there yet' (C3/A).

A tenet of this study has been to establish whether Tasmania's municipalities have been recipients of guidance regarding sustainable tourism as a result of diffusion of UNWTO advocacy regarding its implementation at the destination level. In this regard, the research produced no evidence that the Australian Government when a signatory to the UNWTO had communicated such advocacy to Tasmania's municipalities. Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston (2012:413) have pointed to the 'messy legislative environment impinging on tourism's development and planning in Australia' suggesting but one reason for the continuing absence of understanding among Tasmania's municipalities regarding the concept of sustainable tourism and which may have confirmed why this issue has never been communicated by national to local government. In respect of the concept that tourism should be managed for sustainable outcomes, data from the study indicated that municipalities were yet to be adequately informed on the issue. In the interim, data from phase one identified that ninety-three percent of documents offered no link between tourism and the issue of sustainability. When participants were interviewed during phase two regarding the

same issue, five participants commented that the matter would benefit from being a State led initiative, but that the matter of sustainability had yet to be taken seriously.

'I was wondering about tourism because whilst sustainability might be one of the terms listed in our goals, I think we are just that far away from it, it hasn't come under serious consideration' (G1/B).

In 2014 the State government's position on this issue was confirmed when the Tasmanian State Planning Commission's took the decision to terminate production of its annual Sustainable Environment Report (edotasmania, 2014).

Oversights regarding the consequences associated with the exclusivity of pro-growth tourism policies such as exemplified by tourism policy directives at the National level of Government were less overt among Tasmania's local governments. A minority of interview participants drew attention to the potential for environmental issues to arise as a direct consequence of tourism. However, questions regarding the capacity of the local environment and local communities to endure increased tourism influxes attracted limited interest among interview respondents. Morris and Kaufman (2008) have pointed to the example of Tasmania's Port Sorrell in which unregulated development occasioned by seasonal influxes of tourists rendered the location socially and environmentally unsustainable due to high vehicle dependency, inadequate services, poor management of river systems and energy inefficient buildings. Except for minor and isolated instances the research detected no evidence to indicate local approaches to tourism's development among Tasmania's municipalities had proceeded in pursuit of ensuring social or environmental sustainability. In this regard Higgins-Desbiolles (2010) has argued that the unsustainability of the tourism industry has persisted because it embodied a culture-ideology of consumerism, the economic basis of which precluded engagement with limitation in any form. Significantly, the current study found that in many cases where the term 'sustainable' occurred this had more generally described issues related to economic management. These encompassed finance, employment, visitor volume and tourism receipts, suggesting imprecise usage and that the term was used inappropriately to signify the perpetuation of growth rather than conservation as a counter to unbridled growth. This issue was exemplified where several interview participants identified the State Government as the

source of overarching pressure on local government regarding demands that 'sustainable' economic performance take precedence over other forms of sustainability.

Acknowledgement of the benefits of sustainable practice were identified among several municipalities and data resulting from phase one of the research identified sixty-five percent of Tasmanian councils declaring for sustainability as a planning consideration. However, that this finding did not extend to actual implementation was supported by a general dearth of understanding subsequently identified in phase two among the majority of participants regarding sustainability as a planning tool.

'It's very hard being a small council, we're only interested in financial sustainability' (C2/A).

A general preoccupation with financial performance prompted more than one participant to emphasise that sustainability had first meant ensuring financial sustainability to avoid amalgamation with neighbouring municipalities who could not provide such assurances. Several participants had admitted to having no association with the topic of sustainability with some admitting to having little understanding of its relevance to local affairs (Ruhanen, 2013).

In phase one, mention of sustainability in council planning documents was found to suffer from generalisation, but in phase two personal perspectives volunteered provided for a more factual assessment. These were either observed to overlook a duty of care regarding local social and environmental integrity or proved less than informed regarding strategies by which to do so. Dredge and Jamal (2015) have argued there has been a tendency at the local level of tourism politics for the interests of actors not aligned with the prevailing economic discourse to be marginalised. In phase one, the research identified a general fixation among councils to promote local topographic and cultural icons for their economic relevance while environmental aspects did not attract mention. The prevailing neoliberal market environment and its tendency to embroil government at all levels in competitive tourism markets has again argued that such responses reflect rational choices premised on the exclusivity of economic agendas.

However, in phase two of the current study participants volunteered little awareness regarding the relationship between excessive tourism volume and its sustainable management that might ensure social and environmental integrity. The findings supported the earlier contention that where initiatives regarding sustainability were perceived to be in opposition to maximising economic advantage they were unlikely to be received.

While references in phase one gave token assent to the merits of sustainable practice, no evidence pointed to its operationalisation and of the twenty-nine Tasmanian local council documents analysed use of monitoring instruments necessary for its implementation were not in evidence. Schianetz, Kavanagh and Lockington (2007) have drawn attention to the ready availability of a range of tools with which comprehensive sustainability assessments could be applied to local tourism destinations. These included sustainability indicators, environmental impact assessments and multi-criteria analysis. To have effect, the integration of sustainability into local planning schema, including the management of sustainable tourism has required the application of monitoring and reporting instruments. The instrument of choice favoured by the Global Reporting Initiative and the UNWTO was Triple Bottom Line reporting because it provided a reporting tool for the economic, social and environmental accountability of the administrative body concerned. In the case of Tasmania this responsibility has fallen to local municipalities as administrative centres. In phase two, approximately half of interview participants acknowledged awareness of the TBL concept with a small number volunteering that the principle had been subscribed to over time but not always referred to by name. Notwithstanding this assertion the data identified that local government in Tasmania has possessed limited awareness of TBL, its uses and of standards set by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI, 2012a).

'Monitoring is very hard, and we get questions all the time from elected members, but overall, no, we don't have a reporting mechanism. I guess if there was anything from the State or regionally, then we would have more dialogue and discussion around how that could be implemented' (D1/B),

These findings have contrasted with the experiences of other Australian governments

as exemplified by the National Auditor General's Office (ANAO, 2004) and ACT Government (2011) where the progressive adoption of TBL in conjunction with standards set by the GRI have been implemented. One interview participant in phase two noted that the principle of monitoring to assess economic, social and environmental impacts had frequently been applied as a first step where developmental precedents had yet to be established. Data for the current study suggested the presence of a general amenability to the principle of sustainability locally, but that its integration into tourism policies had yet to attract interest. Still other participants while acknowledging the value of TBL noted it had not been allowed to detract from the primary objective of establishing financial viability in compliance with directives set by the State Government (Parliament of Tasmania, 2011; TRA, 2011). The research concluded that this and associated economic pressures had served to retard progress towards integration of sustainability as a developmental precept.

In respect of alternative reporting instruments allied to the implementation of sustainable practice, during phase two of the research a small number of participants had identified commonalities with the Precautionary Principle (PP). More generally Gardiner (2005) has argued for the global application of PP due to its potential to exert a positive influence on sustainable development. The relevance of its relationship to the principal of sustainable practice has emerged as a standard and underpinning international environmental issues such as climate change. Jacobs (2014) has also noted that a major benefit enshrined in the Precautionary Principle is that it has not been dependent on the presence of scientific certainty before enactment. In respect of the current study one Tasmanian municipality faced with circumstances for which no precedents existed responded by choosing not to initiate action where outcomes were in doubt and in doing so had demonstrated awareness regarding the value of planning for precautionary action.

'From the council's point of view, we are very aware that everything has to be environmentally driven first, before its capital or economic value is assessed. All the development and planning and the paperwork has had to occur environmentally, before it got all the ticks to say you can go to the next stage'
(WT1/A),

However, this example was not typical and Jacobs (2014) has argued the difficulty of estimating such risks with certainty noting that the number of variables involved when attempting to predict ahead of an event, whether scientific or otherwise, are inherently uncertain. The example has served to demonstrate that where only marginal understanding exists regarding the effects of any particular initiative, such as exemplified by the impact on Tasmania's communities from increases in visitor volume predicted to follow the national *Tourism 2020* pro-growth tourism agenda, that caution would be warranted.

7.4 Discussion Concerning Community

Data drawn from the eight indicators comprising Theme D 'Community' for phase one dealt with the impact of tourism on Tasmanian communities and specifically aspects of the relationship between councils and their communities. Stratford (2008) has argued the existence of particular sociological characteristics that identify Tasmanian communities, noting their 'Islandness' and the relevance to communities of their sense-of-place. In this regard phase one identified widespread concern on the part of local councils to pursue issues critical to resident's interests. Data from this phase also identified several reported instances of council/community forums convened to measure resident's views on tourism. The issue of pro-growth tourism appears to have held particular significance for Tasmanians, but Stratford (2008:160) has cautioned 'deep divisions exist about the effects on community and place of various processes of economic globalisation and ecological modernization'. In this regard, whereas participant interviewees identified pro-tourism by many residents interested to bolster the local economy this was also identified as the source of polarisation in communities. In this regard, several participants during phase two of the research had drawn attention to increased levels of resentment among residents coinciding with visitor influxes during peak season. This was confirmed in earlier surveys conducted by Tourism Research Australia (2009) in which community divisions were identified. These located varying levels of intolerance expressed by residents towards visitors in Tasmanian coastal destinations. Briassoulis (2015) has argued that such resident divisions were not an uncommon phenomenon for tourism destinations where local infrastructures commensurate with community size, were then shared with a significantly expanded seasonal community of visitors resulting in

a shared pool resource. In this, residents became proximate to the benefits and costs of the presence of tourists that included increased sensitivity to tourism's negative impacts, but also its economic benefits (Bailey and Richardson, 2010).

Choi and Sirakaya (2006:1285) have argued that the resident's role in ensuring that sustainable limits of tourism are not exceeded is fundamental to the integrity of the community. In research concerning sustainability indicators for managing tourism in communities, they have drawn attention to the importance of acknowledging the destination's 'sense-of-community'. The comparatively modest size of Tasmania's regional economies has argued for the presence of tourism as a source of economic support for resident communities that could then ensure the continuance of their sense-of-place. In that regard, both phases one and two of the research confirmed tourism as a primary source of that economic support. Several participants in phase two stated that the contribution made by local tourism ensured the continued viability of local businesses considered by their communities to constitute the active core of their sense-of-place. However, both phases one and two of the research could detect no evidence regarding awareness of the social and environmental effects on those communities from excessive tourism. In this regard, when drawing attention to differences in the sociology of Tasmania's communities, Stratford (2008) has recommended heightened regard is warranted with respect to how the sense-of-place is assured. But the current study identified the near absence of informed approaches to sustainability or use of TBL reporting among local government. The current study has argued that rational choices by National and State Government in response to globally competitive tourism markets have engendered consequences for the social and environmental integrity of Tasmania's resident communities and their sense-of-place.

Airey and Ruhanen (2014) have noted that for Australia the economic rationale for maximising tourism demand has been considerable with Asian markets providing focus for *Tourism 2020* as well as promotional agendas for State Governments. For Tasmanian communities, the limited awareness detected regarding sustainability has argued that the exclusivity of this focus is likely to realise economic gain in the short-term, but the risk of social and environmental degradation in the long-term. Moscardo and Murphy (2014) have drawn attention to the example of a Hawaiian community that lobbied its government to cease promotion of its town because the negative

impacts of tourism were considered to outweigh the benefits. For Tasmania, data resulting from phases one and two have indicated that, while not dismissive of tourism's economic relevance, the social and environmental issues raised by the advent of further increases in tourism warrant attention.

7.5 Theoretical Perspective

Rational Choice Theory has been utilised throughout this study to explore Tasmanian local government responses to tourism and whether the inherent political and economic pressures driving tourism's growth permit the principle of sustainability to be integrated into tourism policy. The current political economy of tourism concerned with the exclusive pursuit of market led growth for maximum economic advantage has given rise to competing perspectives regarding sustainable tourism. Buckley (2012) has argued that the tourism industry shows little sign of becoming sustainable in the near term and that as distinct from perspectives entertained by academia, the principal that sustainability should integrate with world tourism markets is at once in conflict with competitive market environments concerned with power and economic growth. This position is made clear by Airey and Ruhanen (2014:157) who have argued 'the neoliberalist ideology and the economy of Australia permeate virtually all aspects of tourism policy-making'. The purpose in using RCT to explore these issues has been as an aid to improved understanding regarding the local tensions that may result from these legitimate but competing perspectives. The current study identified that, whereas Airey and Ruhanen (2014) identify the purpose of tourism policies at National and State Government levels as focused exclusively with maximising economic growth to the exclusion of other social and environmental considerations, this has not been the case at the local level of government in Tasmania. That is, the determinants of rational choices at the municipal level have not been exclusively economic, but patterned on reciprocal considerations that included the wellbeing of resident communities. In this form, economic growth through increased tourism was widely regarded as contributing to support the concept of community and an entrenched identification with its sense-of-place. Both phases one and two of the current study identified this factor as a significant motivating influence among Tasmania's twenty-nine local governments and councils in which regard for community and concern for environment also constituted rational choices and despite

limited awareness being identified regarding the principle of sustainable tourism and its values.

Variations identified regarding perceptual differences towards tourism in Tasmania by the State's two tiers of government have suggested the degree of reciprocity involved can determine differences in rational choices made by those tiers. Ostrom (1998) has argued that reciprocity can ensure community wellbeing by enhancing returns from cooperative action through a sense of obligation in which short-term economic self-interest is subordinated. In international tourism market environments, a postulate of RCT assumes rational choices to be predisposed to exploitative behaviour in competitive economic transactions. Such choices are predicated on maximising advantage and proceed without regard for the fortunes of others (Burns, 1972; Druckman, 1998; Scott, 2000). A number of participants to interviews during phase two of the research elected to identify Tourism Tasmania's focused generation of tourism demand in competitive markets as exclusively economic. Boudon (2009) has suggested that the utility of RCT is in proposing that relationships in such exchanges are in and of themselves rational responses and selected from a range of alternatives. The choice to maximise economic advantage in transactions was impersonal and determined by the level of reciprocity between participants to the exchange. Burns (1972) has usefully provided a typology of reciprocity that identified variations in transactional responses (Table 7.0).

Table 7.0: Burns Typology of Exchange Relationships

Type 1	Mutually Benevolent Relationships
Type 2	Mutually Considerate Relationships
Type 3	Mutually Exploitative Relationships
Type 4	Mutually Hostile Relationships
<i>Source: Burns (1972)</i>	

Burns (1972) typology has proposed that perspectives determining rational choices in competitive trading environments and exemplified by Tasmania's participation in offshore markets, has been impersonal and concerned solely with maximising economic advantage. This behavioural predisposition and the environment in which it

manifests have marked it as essentially different to those characterising rational responses among Tasmania's municipalities. The Type 3 relationships characterising exchanges in competitive markets such as exemplified by Tourism Tasmania, did not imply wrongdoing, but rather a legitimate behavioural response to the competitive climate being engaged.

Conversely, the current study identified that behaviour exhibited by Tasmania's municipalities, was generally characterised by reciprocity that was obliged to acknowledge others in the community. These responses and the environment in which they occur have determined rational choices that Burns categorises as considerate or Type 2. Durkheim (cited in Marshall, 1996) has observed of the smaller community that they are less aligned with rational business exchanges that characterise modern economies and more likely to be premised on consideration of their effect on others. In respect of Tasmania's municipalities, the current study suggested that transactions were generally characterised by Type 2 (mutually considerate) in which social exchanges were premised on mutual consideration and obligation (Marshall, 1996). Burns has suggested that such transactions were common where relationships were required to endure such as exemplified by Tasmania's cohesive communities and strong identification with their sense-of-place (Wenger, 1998; Tinsley and Lynch, 2008; Adams, 2009). In this, actors as party to exchanges were likely to display behaviour conducive of preserving long-term relationships (Marshall, 1996). It was conjectured that transactions predicated on Type 2 behaviour would consider the needs of other types including Type 3, but conversely Type 3 behaviour would not reciprocate unless implicitly directed to do so by mandate or policy.

The forgoing exploration has used the theory of rational choices to consider perceptual differences towards tourism identified in the current study between State and local government in Tasmania. The relationship between Tourism Tasmania and the State's municipalities regarding approaches to tourism have suggested they are premised on entrenched cultural differences that promote sub-optimal communication. The limited cooperation identified has persisted despite both institutions being aligned by the common purpose of managing tourism for Tasmania's benefit. The entrenched nature of the communication disconnect was identified as contributing to less than adequate leadership of tourism in Tasmania and

by extension the cooperation necessary for the successful adoption of sustainable tourism. The use of RCT to explore this dilemma has subsequently served to indicate that while each of the two institutions involved have sought to maximise tourism's growth, their essential purpose in doing so was different. Piercy and Ellinger (2015) have argued that the situation has been widespread and in which cross-functional relationships between the supply and demand sides of organisations, because they are diverse in nature, have been prone to frictions capable of blunting performance. While the intergovernmental differences identified by this study persist, the suboptimal communication involved is anticipated to retard the inception of sustainable tourism in Tasmania.

7.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings from phases one and two of the research and its relationship to the literature regarding economic growth through the political agency of tourism and its widespread resistance to moderation through the introduction of sustainable tourism. The research question has asked – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* The question's pertinence has derived from the present state of uncertainty surrounding Tasmanian municipal responses to a UNWTO (2008) edict urging the introduction of sustainable tourism at destination levels in mitigation of the negative externalities known to attend significant increases in tourism volume. The current study proceeded on the basis that to answer the research question and the two related sub-questions would necessitate clarification by Tasmania's local councils and local governments regarding four issues. The scope of stakeholder influences acting on tourism's development in Tasmania, the nature of local perspectives towards the presence of tourism, local awareness regarding sustainability and its integration with tourism policy and the nature of Tasmanian community responses to tourism.

Discussion first considered the spectrum of stakeholder influences acting to direct the course of tourism at the municipal level of government in Tasmania. Tourism's predominance as a source of economic growth, from global to local, has occurred in consequence of the prevailing neoliberal free market paradigm. The competitive trading environment that this has engendered and the economic promise assumed to

result from increased market share has marked tourism as an essentially political preoccupation for virtually all governments (Dredge and Jenkins, 2009). Phases one and two of the study's research identified a multiplicity of stakeholders ranging from National and State Governments to public private arrangements, corporate expertise and council community cooperation. However, the discussion determined that the various influences acting on tourism in Tasmania were not uniform. The study identified direct influences from the Australian Government as negligible, but indirectly the literature confirmed a significant influence in the form of demand driven policies and increases in tourism projected to result from aggressive marketing of the Australian product in Asia (Reid, Ruhanen and Johnston, 2012; Airey and Ruhanen, 2014). Influence exerted by Tourism Tasmania, the State's tourism commission, despite its status and proximity to the island's twenty-nine municipalities was found to be marred by inconsistencies. The literature determined that the intergovernmental communication disconnect involved was far from unique where supply and demand factions of the same organisation were concerned (Piercy and Ellinger, 2015). The resulting discord had proved instrumental in several of Tasmania's municipalities choosing to seek alternate arrangements regarding tourism. These included agreements with corporate partners and various other arrangements including cross border pacts for competitive advantage.

Local government perspectives were examined concerning responses to the presence of tourism. Of these, the pre-eminent view emerged that tourism was regarded exclusively as a source of economic benefit and divorced from social and environmental considerations. The response appeared to result from the widespread perspective that, were local tourism to decline significant community austerity would follow. In this, it was shown that Tasmania's smaller municipalities regarded tourism as an essential cornerstone in the continued survival of their community because the regular presence of tourists amounted to the continued financial viability of their 'sense-of-place'. But in this regard, discussion also considered the issue of financial constraints experienced by the majority of municipalities and that had this served to inhibit responses to tourism's development. Municipal responses to tourism were also identified as being further constrained by limited competencies, the necessary precondition for progressing tourism's local development beyond marketing rhetoric. This condition was identified as exacerbated by the absence of sound leadership

(Trudeau-Poskas and Messer, 2015). The research data also identified municipal perceptions regarding the current adequacy of leadership in the State's tourism industry as unambiguously flawed and lacking direction.

Discussion then examined the extent to which Tasmanian local government policies and practices regarding tourism were informed by sustainable practice as a necessary precondition for ensuring continued social and environmental integrity. The data indicated that frequent use of the term sustainability in reports analysed were, with one exception, not supported by evidence that the concept was widely understood or in that event that it had been operationalised. Similarly, the discussion determined that local government awareness regarding the concept of sustainable tourism was marginal to non-existent (Ruhanen, 2013). This prompted further questions in respect of knowledge adequacy as it applied to local tourism planning and the presence of a sustainability component in local policies regarding destination development. Concerning sustainable practices, data recovered suggested that where municipalities were less than informed in some cases a duty of care had been overlooked regarding the social and environmental wellbeing of their communities.

Discussion concluded with an examination of local government perspectives regarding the effects of tourism on the Tasmanian community and what responses would ensure their resiliency in the face of significant influxes in tourism volume. The preoccupation with tourism's economic relevance for the twenty-nine municipalities involved was shown to put at risk the social and environmental integrity on which that tourism depended. The sociology of Tasmanian communities was discussed and the need to ensure due regard for the continued integrity of the sense-of-place that has provided the cultural bedrock for the State's population (Stratford, 2008). Rational choice theory was used to explore the political, economic and social factors determining the status of sustainable tourism constituting the core of the study. The theory was used to explore differences between the cultures of Tourism Tasmania and Tasmania's local councils and local government as a possible explanation for the intergovernmental communication disconnect identified by the study (Burns, 1972).

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

8.0 Introduction

The objective of this study has been to address a gap in the literature concerning diffusion of a global UNWTO (2008) edict advocating implementation of sustainable tourism at destination levels and whether this had subsequently been communicated to Tasmania's local councils and local governments. In this regard, the study sought evidence that Tasmania's local government tourism policies and practices were informed by sustainable practices and whether the concept had been integrated or alternatively resisted at the community destination level. The concept of sustainable tourism has been advocated by the UNWTO as a global initiative designed to counter the unsustainable level of social and environmental externalities associated with tourism's growth rate. But the pro-growth mantra aligning tourism with the economic agendas of government at all levels has proved resistant to moderation such as inferred by the concept of sustainable tourism. Tasmania's greater reliance on tourism's economic contribution relative to other Australian States and its dependence on the socio-cultural and environmental standing of its communities as tourism product, have argued strongly for the integration of sustainable tourism practices able to ensure its long-term participation in global markets as particularly important.

Advocacy for the implementation of sustainable tourism has nevertheless relied on effective monitoring that could alert communities to tourism's social and environmental impacts when they exceeded the destination's capacity to cope. However, while the concept is sound it has continued to conflict with the neoliberal growth paradigm strategising the maximising of tourism's development through government pro-growth policy agendas. The market-oriented policies involved have proved largely intransigent in respect of initiatives that sought to mitigate the negative social and environmental externalities known to attend tourist influxes at destinations (Helbling, 2010; Buckley, 2012). Moderation urged to tourism's unsustainable growth rates and enshrined in the UNWTO edict advocating the introduction of sustainable tourism has drawn weak response, with the Australian Government withdrawing membership from the UNWTO in September 2015. This, the concluding chapter of the study was concerned to summarise conclusions resulting from research regarding

the influences from this global conflict on the implementation of sustainable tourism as it applied to the Australian island State of Tasmania. Initially, the two supporting research sub-questions have been addressed before then answering the primary research question – *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* This is followed by comment regarding the study's significance and contribution to knowledge. Thereafter, the study's contribution to both practice and theory has been detailed followed by comment regarding the limitations of the study and its implications for further research.

8.1 Addressing Sub-Question One

1. *To what extent has sustainable tourism been incorporated into local council economic development strategies?*

The inclusion of sub-question one as a guiding factor for the study stemmed from the essentially political nature of tourism (Macbeth, 2005). The study subsequently determined that the tourism policies of both the Australian National and Tasmanian State Governments, whether directly or indirectly, were dominant sources of influence on Tasmania's local council responses to tourism. While data resulting from the study identified local communication with the National Government as sparse to non-existent, the indirect effect on tourism in Tasmania from the expanded national tourism budget ceded principally to generating tourism demand in Asia through *Tourism 2020* could not be overstated. During phase two of the research, several respondents confirmed this, drawing attention to the importance of their municipalities being 'China ready'.

The Tasmanian State Government was identified as exerting both direct and indirect influence on local council responses to tourism. In common with the National Government, the marketing focus of Tourism Tasmania has also generated tourism demand from both international and domestic markets. Repercussions of that marketing focus were found to influence local council responses to tourism in several ways. The State's exclusively demand-oriented pursuit of maximising tourism's economic contribution was identified as limiting scope for sound and regular cooperation sought by Tasmania's councils and local governments as custodians of the tourism product. In phase two the resulting communication disconnect was

identified as widespread and exacerbated by a leadership deficit within the tourism industry.

Data resulting from the study indicated an imbalance between the focused generation of tourism demand and adequate attention given to the social and environmental consequences of that action. In this regard, evidence of guidance concerning management of the demand generated and how local councils should respond to increased tourism was unclear. In phase two of the study, interview participants identified the effect of the shortfall in informed guidance and how they might respond to the presence of increased visitor influxes was found to influence responses to tourism in two ways. First, actions directed at tourism by councils were in the majority of cases ineffectual. In the absence of informed input, tourism planning remained at pedestrian levels and confined to marketing initiatives generally based on inadequate funding and void of strategies acknowledging infrastructure limitations. Second, the paucity of cooperation between Tourism Tasmania and Tasmania's councils and local government had acted to influence local perspectives regarding what could reasonably be expected from the presence of tourism. The majority of those perspectives identified tourism's economic promise as limited by both fiscal and information constraints.

8.2 Addressing Sub-Question Two

2. To what extent have the principles of sustainability been incorporated into the Tasmanian local government decision-making process in relation to tourism's development?

The second sub-question was designed to probe local government employee perspectives regarding responses to the tourism effect. The generally overt standing of tourism as a source of economic benefit, because it has been reflective of the exclusively pro-growth mantras pursued at National and State levels had by definition omitted reference to tourism's other dimensions. These, the socio-cultural and environmental facets of tourism's impacts on local communities completed the more holistic perspective able to determine the amenability of local tourism to the principle of sustainability.

The study determined that Tasmania's local governments and by extension those

communities represented, beyond acknowledgement of tourism's economic value also declared an approximately equal regard for the continued standing of their environmental assets. The social integrity of the State's communities and the importance to them of their sense-of-place were also regarded as significant. However, absence of a comprehensive perspective unifying the economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects of tourism manifesting among Tasmania's municipalities resulted in less than favourable outcomes. In these, no link was acknowledged regarding the potential for conflict between tourism's economic growth and the necessity of conserving the future integrity of the local environment on which it was reliant. By contrast, in the vast majority of cases municipalities identified the topographical features of their local environment as tourism capital and product for consumption in the service of economic growth. Similarly, the importance bestowed by Tasmania's communities on their sense-of-place was not accompanied by caution regarding the long-term socio-cultural risks known to be associated with unmonitored tourism influxes. The absence of a unifying perspective allowing responses to tourism's presence to be approached holistically meant that by default, the short-term economic significance of tourism was allowed to dominate local consciousness with no apparent regard for its longer-term impacts.

8.3 Addressing the Primary Research Question

To what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?

This study has identified that policy agendas directed to fostering the growth of tourism by Australia's National and Tasmania's State Government, have assumed an exclusively economic perspective in which Tasmania's local communities and local environments have constituted tourism product for consumption by tourists. In this scenario, communities were assumed to consent to the economic benefits forecast to follow. While in the short-term this may be correct, the market-focused nature of National and State tourism policies, have remained silent regarding acknowledgement of the more injurious consequences known to accompany excessive tourism and its potential to precipitate social and environmental change. In this regard, the current study has argued that the pro-growth tourism strategies pursued by both National and State Government were ideologically in conflict with the principle of moderated growth through sustainable tourism. The study, which focused on perspectives

gathered from twenty-nine local councils and thirty-eight local government employees, identified that the concept of tourism managed for sustainable outcomes was not understood while the maximising of tourism's growth was unambiguously clear. In consequence, the potential for long-term socio-cultural and environmental damage in the wake of tourism's unsustainable growth rates in Tasmania have continued to be ill defined.

The high touristic value afforded Tasmania's pristine topography (Government of Tasmania, 2013a) has argued strongly for the primacy of its effective management as a sustainable resource in accord with the UNWTO edict noted earlier. The significance of the current study has been to establish that Tasmania's twenty-nine municipalities have continued to court economic growth through the maximisation of unsustainable levels of tourism because they have been unaware of the potential long-term risks of doing so. This study has established a general lack of local understanding regarding the merits of maintaining tourism to sustainable levels. That, while National and State government pro-growth agendas have pursued increased market share in tourism they have done so largely oblivious of its socio-cultural and environmental repercussions. One unintended consequence for Tasmania, due to its greater reliance on tourism traffic, was that by default its communities, their sense-of-place and their environment when commodified for exclusively touristic purposes could incur irreparable damage in the long-term. The benefits resulting from the infusion of currency into Tasmania's modest economy via tourism was to be applauded, but the necessity of implementing sustainable tourism has arisen because without sufficient monitoring the tipping point beyond which destinations loose the capacity to cope cannot be predetermined. In respect of local perspectives regarding tourism in Tasmania and the degree to which sustainable practices are understood by the public sector, the literature has proved mute. Therefore, the primary research question had asked - *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* The data resulting from the two-phase research design has suggested that no single issue could account for the absence of a sustainable approach to tourism in Tasmania, but rather that it has perpetuated due to a set of circumstances conspiring to retard its adoption. These have been presented in answer to the research question.

The majority of Tasmania's twenty-nine municipalities were found to favour increases in tourism for its economic promise, but that this did not manifest as opposition to initiatives regarding the implementation of sustainable tourism. As distinct from the conflictual scenario at the global level between tourism's economic growth and calls for its moderation to ensure the continuance of environmental integrity, Tasmanian municipalities displayed virtually no awareness regarding the benefits to community from ensuring tourism's long-term sustainability. In this regard equal standing was afforded both tourism's economic importance and the importance of ensuring the continued integrity of both community and sense-of-place. The widespread lack of local awareness regarding the inherently conflictual nature of economic growth versus conservation was found to result from an absence of understanding regarding the issues. The widespread occurrence of the resulting information deficit among municipalities was reflected in local government tourism policies and practices, which were void of initiatives regarding monitoring and reporting procedures for sustainable management.

The limited intergovernmental communication regarding tourism identified by the study may be a corollary of such a trend. Data from the research identified that channels between Tourism Tasmania and the State's municipalities were ostensibly dysfunctional in which approximately half of the latter had elected to pursue tourism independently. The research identified a disconnection between Tourism Tasmania and local government in which communication from the former was branded sporadic and uncooperative. The reasons offered for this state of affairs were that Tourism Tasmania did not consider regular interaction with Tasmania's local government as necessary, as the latter was not sufficiently informed regarding the issue of tourism. The primary complaint from local government cast Tourism Tasmania as prone to frequent organisational change to the point that it was considered undependable. Further, that the organisation's marketing focus was at cost to the very integrity of the tourism product on which the generation of demand was based. The communications disconnect identified appeared entrenched in which dialogue had been reduced to observing formalities and otherwise pedestrian responses dictated by intergovernmental protocols. The uncooperative environment that resulted rendered untenable initiatives regarding the imposition of sustainable tourism in Tasmania.

UNWTO advocacy regarding the implementation of sustainable tourism, as the most practical response to counter the adverse effects of tourism at destinations, to have effect, must be integrated with monitoring and reporting protocols. The favoured instrument with which to achieve this is Triple Bottom Line (TBL) reporting. The principle of monitoring to achieve sustainable outcomes has been increasingly acknowledged globally as the reporting standard for corporations, organisations and governments (GRI, 2012). For this reason, questions concerning TBL were included in the research design to gauge Tasmanian local government familiarity with the concept. When research sub-question two was applied (*To what extent have the principles of sustainability been incorporated into the Tasmanian local government decision-making process in relation to tourism's development?*) the results detected only marginal understanding of the principle and that discussion regarding its application had yet to occur. In this regard, the research detected no evidence that the UNWTO edict had been communicated or that the principle of monitoring to ensure sustainable outcomes for local tourism had been raised for consideration. The high regard expressed by Tasmanian municipalities towards the economic merits of increased tourism when coupled to an identified concern to ensure continuance of the State's topographical reputation, suggested amenability to the introduction of sustainable tourism with which to secure both. But data resulting from this study determined that questions currently faced by the Tasmanian tourism industry involving leadership, communication and limited education had served to suspend initiatives regarding sustainable tourism in the short to medium term.

This study sought evidence able to determine the extent to which Tasmania's local government tourism policies and practices were informed by sustainable practices. It has concluded that very little direct evidence was available to support such a position. However, this did not discount aspirations for its implementation. Significantly, perspectives identified among Tasmania's local government towards sustainability, indicated dissimilarities with the exclusively economic policies directing tourism's growth at higher tiers of government (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). For example, among Tasmanian municipalities the study identified that tourism's development was regarded as complementing the integrity of the community's sense-of-place particularly in respect of their social and environmental standing. More generally, in respect of the extent to which tourism was informed by sustainable

practices, the study found that perspectives held by local government towards both tourism and sustainability were that they were not considered oppositional but mutually exclusive. While no link between tourism and sustainability was in evidence the study established that local government perspectives conferred approximately equal importance to both, but that this was premised on a general misunderstanding of the principle underpinning sustainability, its applications and the specifics of its implementation.

8.4 The Study's Significance and Contribution to Knowledge and Theory

The current study has contributed new knowledge by establishing that the adoption of policy agendas by Tasmania's local governments intended to maximise tourism's growth, have overlooked a duty of care regarding sustainability of the resource base on which tourism has been dependent. The study established that Tasmanian local government bestowed approximately equal importance to their community's sense-of-place and environment as they do tourism, but that in the absence of diffusion of the UNWTO edict urging adoption of sustainable practices at the destination level, the principle of sustainability with which to integrate the two was poorly understood. In the absence of acknowledgement of the UNWTO advocacy regarding sustainability, tourism's economic contribution was found to assume an importance disproportionate to the socio-cultural and environmental integrity of Tasmania's predominantly rural communities. In this regard, the study was also able to determine that despite the potential economic advantage to Tasmania of managing tourism for sustainable outcomes, this was currently frustrated by the absence of effective industry leadership and suboptimal intergovernmental communication that had served to disconnect tourism's demand and supply sides. In this, the study identified National and State Government pro-growth tourism policies as a contributory factor in which both local communities and their environments were commodified as tourism product without regard for the effects from the increases in tourism demand forecast to occur. The significance of the absence of awareness of UNWTO advocacy identified regarding the sustainable management of tourism as a contribution to knowledge is of particular importance due to the Tasmanian economy's greater reliance on tourism relative to other Australian States. The high touristic value placed on the continued integrity of the State's pristine topography and social structure has argued strongly for its effective management as a sustainable tourism resource.

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) was utilised to explore the political economy of tourism and the pro-growth agendas shown to be in opposition to the inception of sustainable tourism. RCT is descriptive of a group of theories applied to explain empirical phenomena. Ostrom (1998) has noted that the utility of RCT has been its power to explain human behaviour as premised on self-interested, short-term maximising. The postulates of RCT have predicted behavioural responses as manifesting in neoliberal pro-growth markets where competition has fostered exclusivity in pursuit of maximising market advantage. Tourism's developmental agendas have essentially been the preserve of governments in which policy determinants have strategised tourism's growth for maximum economic advantage. Rational choice theory was first developed to explain the behaviour of participants in such environments (Scott, 2000) and currently tourism has served as a platform common to virtually all governments pursuing economic growth competitively. In such environments RCT has proposed that participation can be expected to pursue the maximising of competitive advantage as a rational choice. The determinants of this rational choice also infer resistance to any behaviour constituting a cost deemed to detract from the maximised result. In this regard advocacy for sustainable tourism rather than tourism's maximisation would be construed an irrational behaviour in competitive markets by virtue of its inherently non-competitive nature. In neoliberal pro-growth market trading environments, the maximising of tourism's development as distinct from moderation through the inception of sustainable tourism has found the latter in conflict with the more dominant pro-growth orthodoxy subscribed to by governments generally. This study has used RCT to explore social phenomena identified among governments towards the economic utility of tourism.

Strategies utilised to fulfill government agendas committed to maximising economic advantage in tourism markets, have run parallel to the 'utility of maximisation'. RCT has required maximisation in some form in which actors were assumed to make rational choices based on distinguishing between the costs and benefits of alternative actions (Ostrom, 1998; Boudon, 2009). This has assumed that in competitive environments, particularly as they apply to tourism markets, governments will pursue maximum economic advantage. This response implies a 'schedule of preferences', the adoption of an exploitative disposition in which the fortunes of others may be disregarded (Burns, 1972; Boudon, 2009). It was argued that responses paralleling

these could be identified among Australia's National and State Government policy agendas that have sought competitive participation in tourism markets. In these, the pursuit of maximum economic advantage from the generation of increased demand has constituted the sole objective. While the overt exclusivity of pro-growth government tourism policy agendas such as exemplified by the Australian Government's *Tourism 2020* initiative have been apparent the current study identified a general disregard in response to concerns regarding the effects from the increased tourism forecast to result.

RTC has been utilised to effect in the study to explore governmental agendas regarding tourism in competitive market environments. Its effectiveness has been in showing that their participation was premised on the need to maximise economic advantage in inherently unpredictable trading climates. Rational choices emanating from this position, because they were oriented to demand generation, resisted initiatives such as sustainable tourism that sought to moderate growth. The literature had established that securing maximum advantage in competitive tourism markets was invariably achieved at cost to sufficient regard for the sustainability of the communities on which the generation of that demand was based, and Dunphy (2003) has noted that in cases where tourist influxes have exceeded certain tolerances destinations have become complicit in their own pathology. RTC was also used to explore the nature of sub-optimal relationships resulting from differing perspectives towards tourism by the two tiers of government in Tasmania. The theory accommodated differences in reciprocity regarding responses to the presence of tourism. This defined Tourism Tasmania's preoccupation with maximising tourism demand as incompatible with the more social characteristics displayed by Tasmania's municipalities where regard for tourism's economic contribution was perceived as a catalyst in the continuance of community cohesion that could ensure continuance of the community's sense-of-place.

8.5 The Study's Contribution to Practice

The current study has identified primary issues that collectively have served to inhibit the developmental potential of sustainable tourism in Tasmania. The State has been significantly reliant on its pristine natural environment for the continued patronage of tourists in competitive markets. However, the finite social and environmental resource

base on which tourism has been reliant has been susceptible to the ravages of over use. It may require understanding on the part of Tasmanian governments generally and beyond the purely economic determinants, if the long-term growth in tourism is to remain viable. The significance of this study's contribution to practice has been to identify three primary issues that currently serve to impede the management of tourism for sustainable outcomes.

First, the study has identified the presence of deficiencies in intergovernmental cooperation as they affect the tourism sector in Tasmania. This finding was significant for being a source of counter productivity in a State committed to competing in international tourism markets. The issue was one of less than productive communication between Tourism Tasmania and the State's twenty-nine municipalities. In this regard, the study identified that Tourism Tasmania's sound performance record regarding generation of tourism demand was not balanced by that organisation's participation that would otherwise ensure adequate management of Tasmanian destinations as the focus of that demand. Revisiting these channels of communication and more particularly open acknowledgement of the cultural differences as the genesis of the problem, should promote constructive dialogue where currently it has experienced limitation. Such an initiative could serve to amalgamate otherwise divergent intergovernmental perspectives and uniting focus towards the common challenge of ensuring optimal performance of tourism's demand and supply sides in Tasmania.

Second, the study identified deficiencies within the State's tourism industry concerning the current level of informed guidance among the majority of municipalities regarding their approach to tourism. This issue was significant because it established that the widespread local aspiration to grow tourism was unsupported by the knowledge necessary for its realisation. While local government approaches to tourism have continued constrained by an ongoing funding and information deficit implicating higher government sources otherwise equipped to provide it, planning for socially and environmentally sustainable forms of tourism have continued below what would otherwise be possible. Moreover, no advantage could be identified in respect of the paucity of education on tourism that would otherwise have benefited the State regarding the presence of tourists. The consequences of this limitation have

manifested in assumptions expressed locally that tourism's development was exclusively a matter of marketing. In this, planning, considerations regarding current infrastructure, service levels and the touristic effect on the local environment, were all overlooked. The issue has recommended urgent rectification through the auspices of education concerning the necessity for a holistic approach to tourism that would encompass the pertinent aspects of its long-term development beyond mere marketing.

Third, the study has identified that Tasmania's tourism industry has suffered from a leadership deficit. This finding was significant because, in the absence of leadership multiple layers of tourism stakeholders by default have remained fixated on maximising demand with insufficient attention given to the social and environmental facets of sustainable tourism. That twenty-nine municipalities have vied for competitive advantage over each other was symptomatic of flawed leadership in which the advantages from presenting a unified whole in competitive markets were sacrificed. This study found that the imbalance between the generation of demand and too little attention given to supply as essentially a leadership issue and one that determined Tasmania's current tourism reputation. The question of leadership has continued to be widely discussed among Tasmania's municipalities, who have expressed hope that sustained remedial action by the State government would effect improvement.

8.6 Limitations of the Study

The following factors were identified as acting to delimit the scope of the study.

The research utilised qualitative interpretive methods in pursuit of identifying local government perspectives regarding tourism and sustainability. The choice of this approach supported an in-depth analysis of perspectives among Tasmania's local councils and local governments towards tourism and sustainability considered to be otherwise unobtainable. In this regard, the study was delimited to the Australian State of Tasmania and the researcher's familiarity with that State. The inherent limitations attending the research findings due to their contextualisation to the Australian State of Tasmania warrant some caution in respect of their amenability to generalisation beyond the focus of the study (Veal, 2006).

The content analysis conducted for phase one of the research, was applied to twenty-nine Tasmanian local government strategic planning documents. Publication of these was a requirement under State law, but the date for publication was not and was found to vary significantly from shire to shire. In consequence, variation in the currency of documents was encountered. While the majority were current, a small number were due to be updated by their respective municipalities. For the majority of these, follow up with the municipality concerned produced the required revision, however in approximately ten per cent of cases an update of the planning document in question was not made available by the municipality concerned. The content analysis for phase one, therefore, proceeded on the basis that ten per cent of documents were limited by information that was not current. However, it is warranted by the researcher that this circumstance has not been sufficient as to detract from the more general findings of the research.

The contextual factors of time and location imposed limitations on the study results. Both phases of the research were reliant on the prevailing conditions present during cross-sectional sampling. That is to say, given the advantages afforded by a longitudinal study, the results of the research may have reflected differing social behaviours and economic circumstances as a consequence of political change and changes in the structure of governance arrangements.

8.7 Implications for Further Research

The current study identified low awareness levels among Tasmania's local governments regarding the diffusion of a global UNWTO edict urging adoption of sustainable tourism practices among destinations. The ramifications of this finding suggested that diffusion of UNWTO advocacy regarding sustainability may not be limited to Tasmania but extend more generally to the remainder of Australia. In this regard and given the significance of tourism to the economies of other Australian states it is argued that the current study holds clear implications for conducting further research able to confirm or refute the Tasmanian condition.

The current study has also established the potential for intergovernmental communication disconnects to arise with the potential to stymie sustainable tourism

initiatives. The data resulting from this study has argued strongly for initiating similar research involving the potential for intergovernmental communication standards to impact adversely on the efficiency of tourism's management. The current study should at the very least be seen as a litmus test for further exploration into responses by other governments in Australia regarding the status afforded sustainable tourism. Limited work has already been undertaken in New South Wales (O'Neill, 2008) regarding the issue of tourism's sustainable management, and in Victoria similar initiatives have recommended adoption of Triple Bottom Line reporting (Parliament of Victoria, 2008).

In view of the inherent urgency implied, the general paucity of research able to identify the degree to which local governments give consideration to the integration of sustainable principles over an exclusively economic focus regarding tourism, recommend it as a suitable focus on which to base further critical research. Tourism's contribution to social and environmental change occasioned by development that proceeds unsustainably is universally acknowledged as irreparable. In this regard use of Rational Choice Theory as a lens with which to explore and better understand the impact of market driven economies on tourism destination communities holds significant implications for conducting further research.

8.8 Chapter Summary

This concludes the final chapter for the study, *Exploring local government approaches to sustainable practice: An investigation into tourism's development in Tasmania*. The study applied a qualitative interpretive methodology to address a gap in the literature regarding tourism and its relationship to sustainability at the destination community level using Tasmania as the context. The chapter first addressed the two research sub-questions, with sub-question one asking to what extent sustainable tourism had been incorporated into local council economic development strategies. This established that pro-growth agendas subscribed to by Tasmania's local councils were generally predisposed to marginalise the socio-cultural and environmental factors of tourism in favour of tourism's economic contribution. The reliance of tourism on its pristine topography gave rise to the second research sub-question that asked to what extent had the principles of sustainability been incorporated into the Tasmanian local government decision-

making process in relation to tourism's development. This question inquired regarding the extent to which local government had considered implementing the principle of sustainable tourism. The findings revealed that despite the advantages of doing so such considerations had not been represented in local tourism policies. That, advocacy for sustainable tourism while not the focus of resistance had yet to be understood locally as a concept.

The primary research question asked - *to what extent are the UNWTO principles of sustainable tourism evident in the policies and planning practices of Tasmanian local government?* The answer revealed that the neoliberal free-market paradigm dominating tourism's maximisation in Australia has engendered an exclusively economic perspective that has commodified both local community and environment as tourism product for consumption by tourists. In this scenario, National and State Governments appear to have overlooked the potential for negative impacts from increased tourism forecast to result from the concerted generation of demand. The risks associated with excessive tourism have been well known and were the subject of global UNWTO advocacy urging the implementation of sustainable tourism at destinations. The answer to the research question determined that in respect of Tasmania, low levels of awareness among the majority of its twenty-nine municipalities regarding sustainability had led by default to the pursuit of tourism exclusively for its economic promise. That, despite the general presence of concerns for community wellbeing among Tasmania's municipalities, caution regarding the social and environmental consequences of excessive tourism was not exercised because the concept of sustainable tourism was not understood by local government.

The study's significance and contribution to knowledge established that adoption of policy agendas by Tasmania's local governments intended to maximise tourism's growth had overlooked a duty of care regarding sustainability of the resource base on which tourism was dependent. But as distinct from intentionally marginalising the concept of sustainable tourism, Tasmania's local governments were not possessed of sufficient understanding regarding the social and environmental impacts of tourism beyond manageable limits. The study's contribution to practice was in identifying an enduring and widespread suboptimal level of communication between State and local government regarding tourism's development in Tasmania. The implications of this

finding for further research recommended interrogation of current intergovernmental communication dealing with the effective diffusion of tourism policy information such as exemplified by the UNWTO edict, from global to local tiers of government.

The study's limitations have been fully identified and recommendations made on the basis of findings from the study. These concerned the current state of Tasmania's tourism industry and recommended an urgent review concerning several issues that have conspired collectively to blunt Tasmania's ability to achieve competitive advantage in tourism markets. Of these, the issue of unproductive communication between Tourism Tasmania and the State's twenty-nine municipalities, a leadership deficit in the State's tourism industry and an imbalance in the approach to tourism occasioned by fixations regarding demand maximisation.

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Appendix A:
Catalogue of Tasmania's Local Government Strategic Planning Documents

<i>Plan No.</i>	<i>Shire Council</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Prepared by</i>
1	Break O'Day	Strategic Plan 2011-2015	Consultant & Council
2	Brighton	Strategic Plan 2011-2021	Council
3	Burnie	Corporate Plan 2012-2017	Council
4	Central Coast	Strategic Plan 2009-2014	Council
5	Central Highlands	Strategic Plan 2009-2014	Council
6	Circular Head	Strategic Plan 2009-2014	Consultant & Council
7	Clarence	Strategic Plan 2010-2015	Council
8	Derwent Valley	Strategic Plan 2011-2015	Council
9	Devonport	Strategic Plan 2009-2030	Council
10	Dorset	Strategic Plan 2008-2012	Council
11	Flinders Island	Strategic Plan 2011	Council
12	George Town	Strategic Plan 2012-2017	Council
13	Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Strategic Plan 2006-2011	Council
14	Glenorchy	Strategic Plan 2011-2016	Council
15	Hobart	Strategic Plan 2008-2013	Council
16	Huon Valley	Strategic Plan 2010-2015	Council
17	Kentish	Strategic Plan 2009-2014	Consultant & Council
18	King Island	Strategic Plan 2011-2020	Council
19	Kingborough	Strategic Plan 2010-2015	Council
20	Latrobe	Strategic Plan 2012-2017	Council
21	Launceston	Strategic Plan 2008-2013	Council
22	Meander Valley	Strategic Plan 2004-2014	Council
23	North Midlands	Strategic Plan 2007-2017	Consultant & Council
24	Sorell	Strategic Plan 2008-2013	Council
25	South Midlands	Strategic Plan 2012-2017	Council
26	Tasman	Strategic Plan 2011-2016	Council
27	Waratah-Wynyard	Strategic Plan 2009-2014	Consultant & Council
28	West Coast	Strategic Plan 2010-2015	Council
29	West Tamar	Strategic Plan 2009-2014	Council

Appendix B:
Municipal Document Word/Syntactic Phrase Frequency Counts

Plan No.	Council	Community	Sustainable/ Sustainability	Tourism/ Visitor	Stakeholders (Tourism)
1	Break O'Day	69	17	21	7
2	Brighton	7	0	0	5
3	Burnie	65	6	9	2
4	Central Coast	34	19	1	4
5	Central H'lands	39	4	12	4
6	Circular Head	36	14	8	4
7	Clarence	32	4	3	5
8	Derwent Valley	23	0	10	2
9	Devonport	48	13	12	4
10	Dorset	31	15	1	5
11	Flinders Island	110	36	11	5
12	George Town	26	7	2	3
13	Glamorgan	67	9	6	4
14	Glenorchy	87	11	3	4
15	Hobart	103	15	1	4
16	Huon Valley	95	29	16	7
17	Kentish	115	28	16	10
18	King Island	12	4	4	5
19	Kingborough	124	15	9	9
20	Latrobe	71	1	26	9
21	Launceston	35	6	4	8
22	Meander Val.	35	4	7	9
23	Nthn. Midlands	177	25	31	10
24	Sorell	43	8	3	5
25	Sthn. Midlands	80	6	13	8
26	Tasman	105	14	46	8
27	Waratah	34	8	7	9
28	West Coast	45	2	10	2
29	West Tamar	46	14	4	6
	Totals	1794	334	296	167

Appendix C:
TASEI Assigned Thematic Values for Strategic Planning Documents

Council	Community			Stakeholders (Tourism)			Perspectives regarding Tourism			Perspectives regarding Sustainability		
	<i>E</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>A</i>
Break O'Day	6	2	1	4	2	2	2	1	5	3	0	5
Brighton	3	0	5	2	0	6	1	0	7	0	0	8
Burnie	4	1	3	3	1	4	0	0	8	1	2	5
Central Coast	4	1	3	2	2	4	1	1	6	4	0	4
Cent. H'lands	6	1	1	1	2	5	4	0	4	3	2	3
Circular Head	7	1	0	3	1	4	2	2	4	4	1	3
Clarence	5	1	2	2	0	6	1	1	6	2	2	4
Derwent Val.	3	1	4	2	0	6	2	1	5	2	0	6
Devonport	6	0	2	3	0	5	3	0	5	3	1	4
Dorset	3	0	5	4	0	4	4	0	4	1	0	7
Flinders	5	2	1	8	0	0	4	0	4	6	0	2
George Town	2	1	5	3	0	5	0	0	8	2	0	6
Glamorgan	3	1	4	4	1	3	3	0	5	2	0	6
Glenorchy	7	0	1	3	1	4	3	0	5	4	0	4
Hobart	5	0	3	4	0	4	1	0	7	4	0	4
Huon Valley	6	0	2	4	0	4	2	1	5	7	0	1
Kentish	5	1	2	4	0	4	5	0	3	5	1	2
King Island	2	0	6	1	1	6	2	0	6	2	0	6
Kingborough	7	0	1	4	0	4	3	0	3	3	0	5
Latrobe	6	1	1	2	0	6	6	0	2	4	0	4
Launceston	6	0	2	4	0	4	3	0	5	3	0	5
Meander Val.	5	0	3	4	0	4	5	0	3	4	1	3
Nthn. Midlands	5	1	2	4	0	4	6	0	2	5	0	3
Sorell	3	1	4	5	0	3	1	1	6	1	0	7
Sth. Midlands	3	0	5	1	0	7	4	2	2	5	1	2
Tasman	7	0	1	1	1	6	6	0	2	7	0	1
Waratah	7	0	1	4	0	4	5	0	3	5	0	3
West Coast	2	0	6	4	0	4	3	0	5	3	0	5
West Tamar	3	1	4	4	0	4	2	3	3	3	0	5
Totals	135	17	80	92	12	126	84	13	133	98	11	123

Appendix D: Tasmanian Local Government Tourism Strategy Documents

<i>Plan</i>	<i>Shire</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Prepared by</i>	<i>Year</i>
4	Central Coast	Local Visitor Strategy	Market Appraisal	Council	2006
5	Central Highlands	Economic Development Action Plan	Rudimentary Marketing Doc.	Consultant	2008
10	Dorset	Dorset Tourism Strategy	Marketing Plan	Consultant	2011
11	Flinders Island	Nature Based Tourism Feasibility Study	Nature Based Tour Development Plan	Consultant	2010
13	Glamorgan Spring Bay	Freycinet Coast Tourism Strategy	Marketing Plan	Council	2004
16	Huon Valley	Regional Tourism Strategy	Market Appraisal & Marketing Plan	Consultant	2009
18	King Island	King Island Visitor Survey	Market Appraisal	Council	2009
21	Launceston	Launceston Tourism Plan	Market Appraisal & Marketing Plan	Consultant	2012
26	Tasman	Tourism Development Strategy	Marketing Plan	Consultant	2011
27	Waratah-Wynyard	Tourism Plan	Market Appraisal	Consultant	2011

Appendix E: Tasmanian Local Government Municipalities

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Office location</i>
Break O'Day	St. Helens
Brighton	Old beach
Burnie	Burnie
Central Coast	Ulverstone
Central Highlands	Hamilton
Circular Head	Smithton
Clarence	Rosny Park
Derwent Valley	New Norfolk
Devonport	Devonport
Dorset	Scottsdale
Flinders Island	Whitemark
George Town	Georgetown
Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Triabunna
Kentish	Sheffield
Kingborough	Kingston
King Island	Currie
Latrobe	Latrobe
Launceston	Launceston
Meander Valley	Westbury
North Midlands	Longford
Sorell	Sorell
Southern Midlands	Oatlands
Tasman	Nubeena
West Coast	Queenstown
West Tamar	Beaconsfield
Waratah-Wynyard	Wynyard

Appendix F: Tourism and Sustainability Evaluation Instrument (TASEI)

Indicator	Theme A: STAKEHOLDERS (TOURISM)	
01	Visitor opinion influenced tourism's local development	E / T / A
02	Local community consultation influenced the tourism development process	E / T / A
03	The document identifies Local Tourism Authority (LTA) participation	E / T / A
04	The document identifies consultation with local tourism business operatives	E / T / A
05	The document identifies State government influence on local tourism development	E / T / A
06	Contracted specialists contributed to the tourism development process	E / T / A
07	The relevant Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) influenced the development process	E / T / A
08	The document indicates the presence of Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements	E / T / A
	TOTAL	
	Theme B: PERSPECTIVES REGARDING TOURISM	
09	The document articulates a strategy for tourism's economic development	E / T / A
10	The document articulates a strategy for tourism's sustainable development	E / T / A
11	The document declares a community preference for tourism's development	E / T / A
12	The document identifies the destinations physical resources as economic assets	E / T / A
13	The document identifies the employment value of tourism development	E / T / A
14	The document identifies visitor numbers, spend and duration of stay	E / T / A
15	The document articulates tourism's local development in marketing and promotional terms	E / T / A
16	A stand-alone document details a plan or strategy for local tourism	E / T / A
	TOTAL	
	Theme C: PERSPECTIVES REGARDING SUSTAINABILITY	
17	The document reflects an awareness of the concept of sustainability	E / T / A
18	The document identifies sustainability as a precept for development	E / T / A
19	The document identifies the value of reporting for sustainability	E / T / A
20	The document includes goals related to environmental protection	E / T / A
21	The document identifies goals related to social cohesion and wellbeing	E / T / A
22	The document acknowledges and quantifies tourism's environmental impact	E / T / A
23	The document identifies a preference for tourism development that is sustainable	E / T / A
24	The document identifies a strategy for implementing sustainable tourism principles	E / T / A
	TOTAL	
	Theme D: COMMUNITY	
25	The document identifies whole-of-community values	E / T / A
26	The document assesses the destination's overall quality of life	E / T / A
27	The document identifies issues critical to resident's interests	E / T / A
28	The document identifies demographics and population levels	E / T / A
29	The document identifies major local economic activities	E / T / A
30	The document draws attention to the locality's principal attractions	E / T / A
31	The document identifies the primary characteristics of the local climate	E / T / A
32	The document identifies awareness regarding climate change	E / T / A
	TOTAL	
<i>E = Evident. T = Tenuous. A = Absent.</i>		
<i>Adapted from a tourism planning evaluation instrument originally developed by Simpson (2001:35).</i>		

Appendix G: Interview Question Checklist

<i>1. How would you describe the local community's conversation about tourism?</i>
<i>2. Do National or State tourism policies influence tourism's local development?</i>
<i>3. What best summarises perspectives of tourism as part of the local economy?</i>
<i>4. Has tourism's development raised social, environmental or economic issues?</i>
<i>5. Is the principle of sustainability a consideration in tourism's local development?</i>
<i>6. Are partnership arrangements a contributing factor in tourism's development?</i>
<i>7. Is Triple Bottom Line (TBL) reporting or similar applied to tourism?</i>

Appendix H: Interview Participant Information Sheet

Investigating Tasmanian local government perspectives of tourism

This information sheet will be of interest to those Tasmanian shire councilors, executives and others directly involved in the developmental direction of tourism.

An invitation to participate

The University of Tasmania is interested to gather views and opinions regarding tourism's local development in Tasmania. Of particular interest, the study seeks perspectives from local government executives and managers charged with directing tourism in their shire. The study will be conducted by Mr. Barry M May in partial fulfillment of a PhD program with the School of Management, a candidature supervised by Dr. Alison Dunn (6226 1914) and Dr. Anne Hardy (6226 7687) of the Business Faculty.

The purpose of the study

The study seeks to achieve a fuller understanding of prevailing perspectives towards tourism among Tasmania's local destinations. As a key tourism decision-maker, your personal perspective on local engagements with that industry mark your opinions as important, and by extension may be relevant to the future developmental direction of tourism in Tasmania. The central aim of the study is to contribute to an improved operational base for the local tourism industry.

Why have I been invited to participate?

As an executive or key tourism operative in Tasmanian local government, your perspectives on the current state of tourism in your shire, its perceived value and desired developmental direction, are of particular interest. The specific knowledge that you are likely to possess towards tourism, mark your contribution to this study initiative as highly valued.

Your voluntary participation will involve taking part in a semi-structured interview of approximately one hour's duration. This will include a limited number of questions, for example a question may ask, 'What best describes your local shire's conversation about tourism? However, these questions are not the main purpose of the interview, but rather your perspectives of tourism as someone influencing its local development. Ideally, the interview environment will be relaxed and the location of your choosing. No pre-determined timeframe is set, but as your time may be at a premium, you can feel free to terminate the session at any

time. Similarly, should you wish to quit the interview before its conclusion, it will not be necessary to furnish reasons for doing so, and data thus far collected will be deleted. For the purposes of communication, office or business contact details will be sufficient.

During interviews, we would appreciate your permission to record the conversation, but only for the purposes of later transcription, and at all times your comments will be treated as confidential. It will not be possible to identify you through specific texts, and your anonymity will be assured at all times. Should you request it, a copy of the transcribed conversation can be made available for editing.

What benefits will result from participation?

Tasmania's reliance on tourism as a key component of its economy, mark it as a suitable focus for sound management practices. However, tourism is a diverse industry requiring the optimal meshing of both its demand and supply sides. In general terms, state governments generate demand for tourism, while it falls to local knowledge to furnish the tourism product, the industry's supply side. This situation marks those views and perspectives held by tourism's local decision-makers as particularly relevant. The benefits resulting from your input lay in their contribution to improving the economic, social and environmental viability of Tasmania's tourism industry.

What will happen to the information when this study is complete?

The interview is confidential and your identity and that of your organisation will not be available for publication. There are no risks associated with participation and opinions you share during interviews will only be known to the interviewer. Moreover, you will be able to raise any issues of concern both before and during the study. As a further precaution, once completed, raw data from the study will be secured under password access on the computer of the chief investigator, Dr. Alison Dunn. Stored data will not identify individual authors, and all raw data resulting from the study, will be destroyed five years from the date of thesis publication. A summary of the research results can be made available by contacting Mr. May.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email: human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H0013282.

Please retain this information sheet for future reference. A consent form will be made available to you prior to the interview. To initiate further discussion please email: barry.may@utas.edu.au School of Management, UTAS or call 03 6261 1228.

Appendix I: Interviews Theme A Stakeholders (Tourism)

First Topic: Dialogue with National Government Regarding Tourism

The first topic sought participant perspectives regarding influence from National Government regarding tourism's local development.

'We have been well supported by the National Government. No complaints about their generosity' (B1/C),

and,

'Not much, although it has been involved in respect of sustainability and climate change. In 2012, we did a project with them in regard to storm events, sea level rises and how that is going to potentially impact on the coastal foreshore and tourism' (L1/B).

and,

'We are contacted with information from the National Government on tourism grants or whatever we may have applied for, but there is no direct contact' (G1/A).

and,

'I don't think they consider us at all' (L1/A),

and,

'Not in the slightest' (B1/A).

Second Topic: Dialogue with State Government Regarding Tourism

The second topic sought participant perspectives regarding the influence of tourism policy directives or other communication emanating from Tasmania's State Government (Tourism Tasmania).

'The digital landscape of promoting a destination or a city, and what it has to offer, is very pricey and it just can't be done on a whim. That's where I think Tourism Tasmania and the Regional Tourism Organisation are good, because they're getting people to the State, they're doing that marketing, we just need to dovetail into their marketing, but that understanding isn't there yet' (D1/A).

and,

'If I talk to anyone in tourism, who's local, ask them what Tourism Tasmania do, they wouldn't know' (C1/B),

and,

'Tourism Tasmania keep changing the plan, I think the market might even get confused about what Tasmania is saying. I think we need to establish one approach, one plan and stay with it for the long haul' (W1/A),

and,

'Translating State policy down to what we do on the ground really doesn't seem to happen. We tend to do what we think is the best thing for our area and basically rely on Tourism Tasmania getting the tourists here in the first place' (C1/A).

and,

'We have a lot of contact with our RTO. They bring to the table certain State tourism incentives to get us involved, but other than that we don't have contact with the State Government directly and that's always been the case' (G1/A),

and,

'We meet with the association once a year formally, they come in and do a presentation to the council, they lay out their business plan and in that they have what they're looking at for local industry and their marketing and any ideas they may have, they lay all that on the table' (C3/A).

Third Topic: Issues Arising from State Government Influence on Tourism's Local Development

The third topic sought participant perspectives regarding Tourism Tasmania's developmental role.

'We are reliant, I think, on the region and the State, and we have become more so as they [Tourism Tasmania] have taken more responsibility and accountability for marketing Tasmania. The co-ordination of that offsets the limited amount that we are able to contribute. To work, it really does need to be a partnership between us and the State' (D1/B).

and,

'Tourism Tasmania has made it clear it's only in the business of selling Tasmania' (B1/C),

and,

'I believe the authority's definition of tourism, and also that of Tourism Tasmania, is that tourism is actually only marketing' (C1/B),

and,

'Tourism Tasmania, their brief is to bring people to Tasmania and they don't really care where they go when they get here. They are judged on how many people get here, not what they do, how much they spend. We (Tasmania) reached a million tourists and local government is left with attracting people to their particular area, but I see an issue there, 29 councils interested in their own patch, so it can get political' (K1/B),

and,

'Many regional areas like ours in Tassie haven't benefited greatly from Tourism Tasmania because they have marketed the iconic places. I think if they get them going there, its up to them to include our town too' (K1/A),

and,

'Tourism Tasmania has tried a lot of things over the years, zone marketing in principle seemed to be heading in the right direction, but it didn't work out that way. The actual result was, those in the regions were fighting with each other, saying, I'm better than you, so I want a bigger share of voice' (WT1/A).

Fourth Topic: Issues Regarding Leadership in Tasmania's Tourism Sector

The fourth topic sought participant perspectives regarding leadership as it relates to tourism in Tasmania.

'Well, the solution is in leadership and not simply handballing it and saying local government, you deal with this. Well, you're not going to get conformity of views from 29 councils. There is only one State government in Tasmania and I think that's really where it leads now' (S1/B),

and,

'I think the gap between State and local as tourism goes, is that whole economic development perspective. Someone who can say, this is how much this region gets back when we commit this much or, if we do this, this is what's going to happen, but there's nobody in that sort of leadership role' (W1/A),

and,

'Tourism Tasmania does a great job selling this State externally, but there is no integrated or strong management regime that operates within the State. No one is actually managing the product, I think the regional bodies are set up, but not resourced to do it. But, there's no policy or strategy, nobody knows where they fit into the picture' (K2A).

and,

'The regional body are very clearly saying, if we take the local tourism or regional tourism to market, there's a chance that Tourism Tasmania may use all of it, some of it, none of it or they may rearrange it to suit their brand or their campaign or whatever at the time. So the regional bodies argue that there is a lack of continuity from Tourism Tasmania to say, here's State, here's regional and here's local and here's industry. It seems to get so far and stop' (WT1/A),

and,

'Absolutely, guidance on tourism from the State doesn't happen' (C1/B).

and,

'Tourism genuinely needs a champion in my opinion, not just for the Hobart region, but for the State. I think that would be a starting point' (K2/A),

and,

'At the end of the day, our focus tends to be servicing tourist customers. One way or another that's what we deal with locally and there's been very little guidance from Tourism Tasmania. They tend to say, this is the plan for the State and this is how we see you fitting into that plan' (C1/A).

Fifth Topic: Issues Concerning Communication in Tourism

The fifth topic sought participant perspectives regarding the standard of communication between Tourism Tasmania and Tasmania's local government.

'Communication isn't the best. They can argue that they do communicate about activities with us, but it's just not early enough, they communicate their activities once they've decided what they're going to do. We could make arrangements for that sort of thing if we knew in advance, but we find out the same time the visitors in Sydney see it on TV. That's the problem I think, they communicate too late' (K1/A),

and,

'I see very little communication from Tourism Tasmania, as a council or as visitor information. Who are they looking to serve? I would have thought it was us. If that's the case, surely they should find out what we want, let us know what is happening and keep us informed as to what they are doing and why' (C1/A),

and,

'Tourism Tasmania do not communicate. They dictate, but don't communicate' (D2/A),

and,

'We've had a couple of meetings with the CEO of Tourism Tasmania and I'm not sure its value. One of the issues we have is the structure of the organisation, its a board that's elected, but I'm not sure how. The mayor and myself attended the AGM and I just questioned afterwards, why I was there, because we had no input as a shareholder, no input into the direction or the path they were heading with all their projects and programs' (M1/A),

and,

'We don't see anyone at the State level, so we really don't know. There's not a lot of interaction with Tourism Tasmania and us as a council' (K1/B).

Sixth Topic: Partnership Arrangements as a Developmental Contribution to Local Tourism

The sixth topic sought participant perspectives regarding contributory partnership arrangements between local government and others towards tourism's development.

'We do have a strong engagement there and we will certainly facilitate those discussions and pull in that expertise, we have had a fair bit of success with events in terms of partners' (D1/B).

and,

'We do, yes. We have a committee, we have a Huon Valley/Kingborough Tourism Committee, which has three main partners, the Huon Valley council, the Kingborough council and the Tourism Industry Association. So every three months the tourism operators basically discuss the markets of the regions. We come up with the marketing plan and implement it, but that's a direct relationship with tourism operators and they then have their own association, and council representatives occasionally go to those meetings. So we have a pretty close relationship with the tourism operators in our region' (K2/B).

and,

'It would depend on what's in it for them, they're all business people and time is precious and they've got to where they are now thru being astute. There's a lot of community pride involved and financially there needs to be an incentive for them to get involved, clearly outlined, otherwise it won't work' (D1/A).

Appendix J: Interviews Theme B: Perspectives Regarding Tourism

First Topic: Local Tourism as an Economic Consideration

The first topic sought respondent perspectives regarding the economic benefits of local tourism.

‘Historically, our council has been pro-tourism with focus on the economic benefits from its development’ (L1/B),

and,

‘It is very much seen as a contributor to our economy’ (L1/A),

and,

‘Local perspectives of tourism are a bit of a mix, but primarily economic’ (D2/A),

and,

‘Tourism is seen in economic terms, no doubt about that. We still have a number of local key businesses, eating houses, overnight accommodation. It is really an economic issue and the survival of local businesses depends on us getting enough people into our area for them’ (C1/A),

Second Topic: Issues of Limited Financial Resources for Tourism

The second topic sought participant perspectives regarding the adequacy of financial resources for tourism’s local development.

‘Absolutely, there needs to be a contribution financially or a commitment to our infrastructure, because communities can’t afford to do much, as they do have a whole range of priorities and tourism is obviously just one of them. To actually have attractions as reasons for visitors to stay, takes a significant cost and to continue to operate them incurs further costs. Why should the community pay for that?’ (D1/B),

and,

‘They’ve got Tourism Tasmania worrying about the demand and trying to attract people and then you’ve got the regional bodies like DST to look after the supply and the quality of the experience that people will actually get when they come here. Yet they are grossly under resourced and we’re talking about

2 or 3 people for Southern Tasmania, they're the ones who are supposed to look after the quality of the experience that the tourist gets. As a State, we're not going to be taken seriously' (K2/B).

and,

'Even some of the operators around here don't understand that in order for tourism to be successful, there's got to be a strategy. Forestry has been a huge part of our history, so there's a gap and something has to fill it, I think tourism can help, but it's got to be backed up with some financial resources, we have to have a product to sell' (D2/A).

Third Topic: Environmental Issues Resulting from Tourism

The third topic sought participant perspectives regarding environmental quality as a direct consequence of tourism.

'Environmentally, we have a number of parks and reserves and there's a general perception of a substantial number of crown national parks in Tasmania. We've found over the years that people coming from Melbourne or Sydney are a lot more focused on the local environment' (L1/B),

and,

'Any new development must consider environmental best practise, especially in our area, because we've got some wonderful areas that border world heritage areas and national parks. So sensitivity to things like skylines, there is a view that whatever we do, we should leave the lightest footprint possible' (M1/B),

and,

'Environmentally it's that 'love to death' type of thing, so there are areas which are particularly attractive that get the crowds and then get ruined, and you can see locations on the island where that has happened' (K2/A).

and,

'From the council's point of view, we are very aware that everything has to be environmentally driven first, before its capital or economic value is assessed. All the development and planning and the paperwork has had to occur environmentally, before it got all the ticks to say you can go to the next stage' (WT1/A),

and,

'As far as the environment and trampling vegetation down, it's a Parks and Wildlife Services responsibility and I wouldn't even like to comment on that. It's a disgrace at the moment, with weed infestation' (C3/A).

Appendix K: Interviews Theme C: Local Perspectives Regarding Sustainability

First Topic: Local Awareness of Sustainability

'It's very hard being a small council, we're only interested in financial sustainability' (C2/A).

Similarly,

'We don't have the issues with sustainability that some coastal areas have with their population swells' (NM1/B),

and,

'Because we are heavy industry based, many issues to do with the environment, society and that sort of thing, relate to the future impacts of our heavy industry, that's where the real sustainability issues are' (G1/B),

and,

'We won the Banksia award then we got ourselves right with money. We won almost every category, we're very serious about benchmarking, we have our own software and make money from that. We've done the environmental bit and we're pretty big on the social bit. We do planning and the big one at present is civic pride. So now we can put in trees, clean up litter. For us, sustainability is a package of all those things, it's our ten year plan' (B1/A).

and,

'Well, we've got a sustainability committee and we did a related vulnerability study which was an interesting exercise. We've got a couple of very passionate committee members at the moment, so they put forward the study and it got funding. Then we were pressed by a couple of politicians and others who asked why the hell we were wasting \$20,000 on a sustainability study?' (M1/A).

and,

'Our council is very pro-active in its approach to development and works within the parameters of sustainability (L1/B).

Second Topic: Local Administrative Issues Impacting on Sustainability

'I guess in a small way this issue has been raised, water quality, local rivers, etc. Another issue would be Rice Grass [a listed weed]. We've again, because it's beyond our resources, tried lobbying government to get some sort of

action. I guess that's probably more where our role is, because we are at the local level, we're aware of these situations' (L1/A),

and,

'On the one hand, the environmental side is about keeping things in a good condition, but if we want to attract people here, we have also to be able to play to our strengths. These natural features are our strengths and when they're not being resourced by the body who should resource them, it doesn't only impact on that body, it impacts on the whole community. That needs to change' (D2/A).

and,

'At the moment the State Government is putting pressure on us all to have long-term financial plans and a whole range of auditing structures in place so that sustainability becomes a major issue for councils around the State' (C1/A),

and,

'Yes, we've been very conscious around it and we've been successful in the past twelve months with grants to look at more energy efficient buildings and energy efficient designs, so we're certainly thinking about it and doing what we can to be more sustainable. We're trying to reduce and find better ways of doing things and reducing the cost of running facilities' (D1/B),

and,

'There's been this issue of sustainability, especially within the context of council amalgamations. Councils recognise the fact that there will always be this push for amalgamation from certain quarters, and one of the ways to address that, is to ensure that we as a council are sustainable in our own right. If you're not sustainable then amalgamation becomes a very attractive issue' (C1/A),

and,

'Sustainability gets talked about in this council a lot, and one of the things this council doesn't want to do is get into a situation where they are forced into an amalgamation' (C3/A).

Third Topic: Sustainability as a Factor in Tourism's Local Development

'Sustainability is important and certainly it's something we are aware of, it's built into our strategies, but it's work in progress. I was wondering about tourism because whilst sustainability might be one of the terms listed in our goals, I think we are just that far away from it, it hasn't come under serious consideration' (G1/B),

and,

'It's not about limiting the number of people that walk our overland tracks in the national parks, it's all about having a sustainable level' (L1/B),

and,

'It has council support and there are a couple of festivals a year, an environmental and sustainability living festival in our area' (M1/A),

and,

'There is a concern about keeping tourism coming but to make sure it's sustainable. That word sustainable is used every time I have a meeting or even a discussion with somebody in tourism' (C3/A),

and,

'The tourism experience is very much connected to the environment here. I think the community is actually looking for tourism development that embraces the environment. There are a few projects that I would say have lacked community support because of the potential environmental impact. Just the fact that you can walk along the coastal area and see bandicoots and other wildlife running right in front of you. Our focus is on tourism development that embraces the environment, but doesn't impact on it' (K1/A).

Fourth Topic: General Awareness Levels of TBL

'No, certainly nothing like Triple Bottom Line has ever been mandated. All that has been mandated for us, is financial sustainability' (S1/B),

and,

'Not in local government, and I think it'll be a long time before our council appreciates that perhaps they should be moving into the 21st century in that regard. There are some very strong conservative value systems that operate

here, so it'll take a while. I think its use [TBL] would be fantastic and I think that would open doors to a very different horizon in terms of community appreciation and a sense of where and how they can develop and improve' (G1/B),

and,

'For council, TBL is significant because we transition quite quickly from entirely peak season driven to almost entirely local driven' (WT1/A),

and,

'Yes, absolutely. The economic development strategy was presented to council last night. TBL is the basic premise of it, the Triple Bottom Line. Outside of that, they've embraced it for ten to twenty years informally, even before it became a catch phrase' (K1/A),

and,

'TBL, absolutely...but more importantly, I think it's that collaboration of a number of players that are actually addressing TBL, and in this case, the environment. Finding the balance is the challenge... we're loved to death over summer, then empty in winter' (K2/A).

and,

'One of the activities we've got within the sustainability group, is how we build TBL into our decision making process. So TBL is one of the subsets that we appraise and want to look at, we're certainly conscious of it, but that's about as far as its gone at this stage. We've had a strong focus on the environment at the council for a long while' (M1/A)

Appendix L: Interviews Theme D Community

First Topic: Community Perspectives Regarding Tourism

The first topic under Community Values dealt with participant perspectives toward the local presence of tourism.

'I would say the community here, generally speaking, are aware of the value that tourism brings to the region. Sure, we have the odd issue from time to time, who doesn't, but in the main residents and tourists get along just fine, tourism is seen as a good thing. I think it's understood' (T1/A).

and,

'I think it would be really hard being an Asian tourist visiting anywhere here or even being somebody who spoke with a very strong accent, or a coloured person. That would be really hard, and I don't know how welcoming we would be to those people if there were a lot of them. Having said that, we would love a bit of Chinese investment, so it's a double-edged sword' (D2/A).

and,

'I believe our community really love to have tourism here' (C3/A),

Second Topic: The Social Context of Tourism

The second topic sought participant perspectives regarding the social impact from the presence of tourists in their community.

'Tourism is the social capital of our communities, like the events we have. We've had a couple of good events in the last couple of years. It's about social capital, of making people feel good. You can go to cities, but they'll never do it in a hundred years, but we have it here, it's so special. People can be connected and feel good about themselves' (NM1/B),

and,

'There's social interaction with tourists as well as tourism's economic value' (L1/B).

and,

'Visitor and owner demographics indicate a significant proportion of sea change/tree change folks who have sold up on the mainland, come to Tasmania, buy a B&B and are very happy with 40% occupancy' (WT1/A).

Third Topic: Community Perspectives Regarding the Economic Value of Tourism

The third topic sought participant perspectives regarding the economic benefits from tourists.

'I think when communities here talk about tourists, they talk about them in the context of being important to the economy' (M1/B),

and,

'I think that generally, people see tourists in economic terms' (L1/A),

and,

'Community conversation about tourism is that its our economy. I presented the economic development strategy to the council last night, and the top line on every section is tourism, pretty much tourism even though we are an agricultural district' (K1/A).